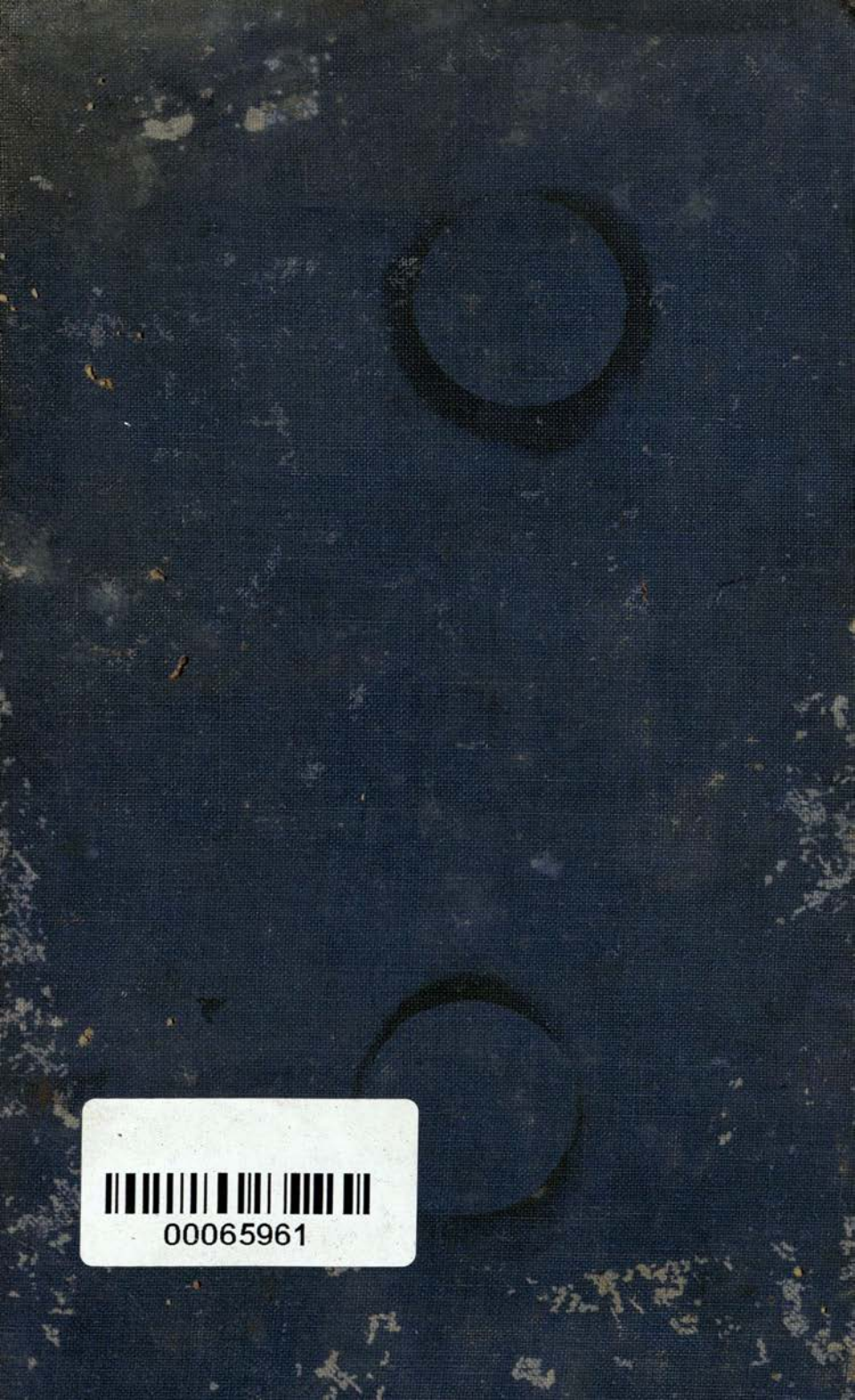
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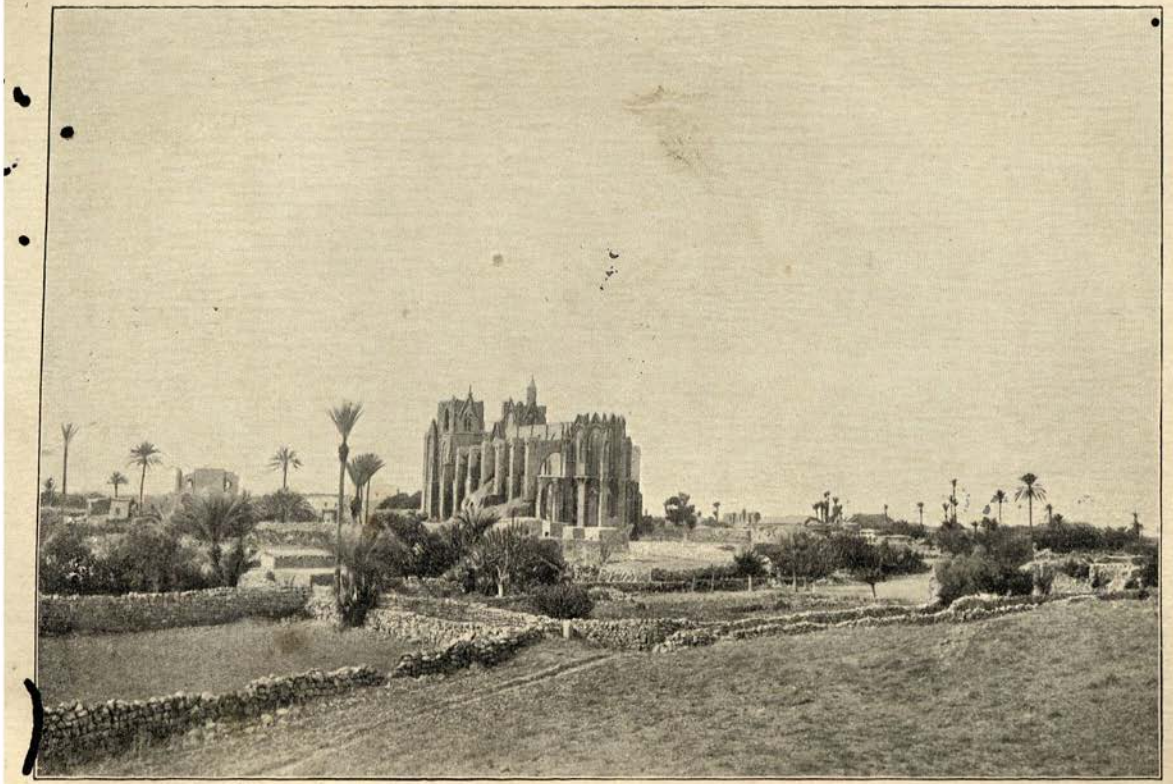
A WINTER PILGRIMAGE

WORKS BY H. RIDER HAGGARD

CETYWAYO AND HIS WHITE NEIGHBOURS.
DAWN.
THE WITCH'S HEAD.
KING SOLOMON'S MINES.
SHE.
JESS.
ALLAN QUATERMAIN.
MAIWA'S REVENGE.
MR. MEESON'S WILL.
COLONEL QUARITCH, V.C.
CLEOPATRA.
ALLAN'S WIFE.
BEATRICE.
ERIC BRIGHTEYES.
NADA THE LILY.
MONTEZUMA'S DAUGHTER.
THE PEOPLE OF THE MIST.
JOAN HASTE.
HEART OF THE WORLD.
DOCTOR THERNE.
SWALLOW.
BLACK HEART AND WHITE HEART.
LYSBETH.
A FARMER'S YEAR.

(IN COLLABORATION WITH ANDREW LANG)
THE WORLD'S DESIRE.



CATHEDRAL OF ST. SOPHIA, FAMAGUSTA

(See p. 154)

A WINTER PILGRIMAGE

Being an Account of Travels through PALESTINE, ITALY, and the ISLAND OF CYPRUS, accomplished in the Year 1900

By

H. RIDER HAGGARD

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

Rxb-d-5

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I offer these Pages

to

MR. & MRS. HART BENNETT

and all other Cyprian friends
whose hospitalities and kindness
have made my sojourn in the
Island so pleasant
to remember

Ditchingham, 1901.

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A WINTER PILGRIMAGE

CHAPTER I

MILAN CATHEDRAL

SURELY Solomon foresaw these days when he set down that famous saying as to the making of many books. The aphorism, I confess, is one which strikes me through with shame whenever I chance to be called upon to read it aloud in the parish church on Sunday. Indeed it suggests to me a tale which has a moral—or a parallel. Some months ago I tarried at Haifa, a place on the coast of Syria with an abominable port. It was at or about the hour of midnight that a crowd of miserable travellers, of whom I was one, might have been seen cowering in the wind and rain at the gates of this harbour. There the judge and the officer bullied and rent them, causing them to fumble with damp hands and discover their *tezkerehs* in inaccessible pockets, which they did that the account given in those documents of their objects, occupations, past history, and personal appearance might be verified by a drowsy Turk seated in a box upon the quay. Not until he was satisfied on all these points, indeed, would he allow them the privilege of risking death by drowning in an attempt to reach a steamer which rolled outside the harbour.

At length the ordeal was done with and we were informed that we might embark. That is to say, we were graciously permitted to leap five feet from an unlit

pier—the steps of which had been washed away in the gale of the previous night, but will, I am informed, be repaired next season—trusting to Providence to cause us to fall into a dark object beneath believed to be a boat. Another Turkish officer watched our departure suspiciously, though what he imagined we could be carrying out of his barren land is beyond my guessing.

"Cook, Cook, Cook!" we croaked in deprecatory tones as one by one we crept past him cowed and cold, fearing that he might invent some pretext to detain us. Therefore it was indeed that we hurried to bring to his notice the only name which seems to have power in Syria; that famous name of the hydra-headed, the indispensable, the world-wide Cook.

"Cook, Cook, Cook!" we croaked.

"Oh! yes," answered the exasperated Turk in a tone not unlike that of a sleepy pigeon, "Coook, Coook, Coook! oh yes, all right! Coook, always Coook! Go to—Jericho —Coook!"

In the same way and with much the same feelings, thinking of the long line of works before me, I mutter to the reader now, "Book, Book, Book!"

Can he be so rude as to answer, after the example of the Haifa Turk—

"Oh! yes, all right! Boook, &c. &c." The thought is too painful: I leave it.

To be brief, I write for various reasons. Thus from the era of the "Bordeau Pilgrim" who wrote in the year 333, the very first of those who set on paper his impressions of the Holy Land, to this day, from time to time among those who have followed in his steps, some have left behind them accounts of what they saw and what befell them. The list is long. There are St. Sylvia, and the holy Paula; Arculfus and St. Wilibad, Mukadasi and Bernard the Wise; Sæwulf and the Abbot Daniel; Phocàs the Cretan and Theodoric; Felix Fabri; Sir John Mandeville, de la Brocquière and Maundrell—and so on

down to Chateaubriand and our own times. But one thing they had in common. They—or most of them—were driven on by the same desire. Obedient to a voice that calls in the heart of so many, they travelled by land and sea to look upon the place where Jesus Christ was born—where the Master of mankind hung upon His cross at Calvary.

I will confess that I have a fancy to be numbered among their honourable company. So it may chance—this is my hope—that when another thousand years or more have gone by advancing the Holy Land thus far upon its appointed future, and the Moslem has ceased to occupy the sacred places, my name may appear with their names. Thus perhaps I also may be accounted a link in the chain of those who dedicated some of their uncertain days to visiting and describing that grey stretch of mountain land which is the cradle of man's hope in the darkness that draws near to every one of us.

My second reason is that I should like to say something about that neglected British possession, the fair island of Cyprus. To-day a Cinderella among our colonies, with a little more care — and capital — she might again become what she was of old, the Garden of the Mediterranean, a land of corn and wine, and in fact, as well as figuratively, a mine of wealth. Of Cyprus but few have written; travellers rarely think it worth the while to visit there, so in this particular at the least I trust that I may not be blamed.

There is, further, a last argument or excuse which I will venture to use, because it seems to me to have a very wide application, far wider, indeed, than is necessary to the instance of these humble pages. It is the fashion nowadays to say that everything is hackneyed; that the East itself, for instance, is practically exhausted; that the reader, who perchance has never travelled further than Ramsgate, can have little more to learn therefrom. "Give us some new thing," cries the tired world, as the Athenians cried of old. They ask in vain,

on this side the grave there is no new thing. We must make the best of the old material or give up thinking and reading, and the seeing of sights. Yet what a fallacy underlies the surface meaning of these words. Is not everything new to the eyes that can see and the ears that can hear? Are there not joys and wonders about us by the thousand which, being so blind and deaf, we seldom seize or value?

Oh, jaded reader, go stand in a garden as I did to-night and watch the great cold moon creep up beyond the latticed trees, while the shadows grow before her feet. Listen to the last notes of the thrush that sways on the black bough of yonder beech, singing, with a heart touched by the breath of spring, such a song as God alone could teach her. And there, in the new-found light, look down at those pale flowers. Or if you prefer it, stand upon them, they are only primroses, that, as Lord Beaconsfield discovered, are very good in salad.

To drop the poetical—and the ultra-practical, which is worse—and take a safer middle way, I cannot for my part believe that this old world is so exhausted after all. I think that there is still plenty to be seen and more to be learned even at that Ramsgate of which I spoke just now. Therefore I will try to describe a few of the things I saw last winter as I saw them, and to chronicle their meanings as I caught and understood them, hoping that some will yet be found for whom they may have interest.

"Upon a certain foggy winter morning we stood at Charing Cross Station en route for Italy, Cyprus, and Syria, viâ the St. Gothard, &c."

This, surely, is how I should begin, for it is bold to break away from the accepted formula of books of travel consecrated by decades of publication.

Still let me do so, and before we leave it, look round the station. It is a horrible, reeking place, Heaven

knows, on such a morning as this of which I write. The most common of sights to the traveller also, and one of the most unnoticed. And yet how interesting. In a sense even it is majestic. The great arching roof, a very cave of the winds; the heavy pencils of shadow flung across its grey expanse; the grimy, pervading mist; the lumps of black smoke edged with white propelled laboriously upwards; the fierce, sharp jets of steam; the constant echo of the clanging noises; the sense of bitted force in those animate machines that move in and out, vanishing there into the wet mist, appearing here in the soot-streaked gloom. Then the population of this vast unfriendly place, the servants of the great engines, and those whom the engines bear on their way to many lands. They come, they go, those multitudinous forms; they are seen, they disappear, those various faces, each of them, if you watch, dominated by some individual note—grief, joy, expectancy, regret, *ennui* even, as may chance.

That train steams out, and those who clustered round it have melted like last night's snow. Some it has borne away; some, friends and spectators, having waved their last farewell, are departed upon their affairs. Now a new train arrives; other crowds appear, drawn from the vast reservoir of London, and with variations the scene repeats itself. This time we take an active part in the play, and presently steam out into the billows of black mist and are lost behind the curtain of the swinging rain. There beneath us runs the inky Thames, sombre, mysterious-looking even, and to the eye, notwithstanding its creeping squalor—though why this should be so it is hard to say—endued with a grandeur that is not the property of many a nobler stream.

Next appear countless, sordid houses, the crowded, monotonous homes, if homes they can be called, for which tens of thousands of Englishmen abandon the wholesome country-side and the pure air of heaven, because—for those who can get it—here in London the

wage is higher. They are done with. Now in their place is stretched the open English landscape, wet and wretched, its green fields showing almost grey beneath the embracing, ashen sky, the trees mere black blots, the roads yellow lines of mud. Yet in its own way it is beautiful, all of it, as the face of Nature is ever beautiful to those who love her, and knowing her moods, can sympathise with them and catch something of their meaning.

So through these familiar things onward to the sea.

"Moderate" was the report of the Channel weather at Charing Cross, which, as the Station-master explained mysteriously, might mean a good deal. In fact we find it blowing a gale, for the spray drives right over the train on to the unhappy passengers as they splash towards the boat quivering and livid, some of them, with anticipatory qualms. But the history of a bad crossing may well be spared. The boat did get out and it was accomplished —at a price—that is all.

If I were asked to devise a place of punishment for sinners of what I may chance to consider the direst degree, a first-class continental hotel is the purgatorial spot to which I would commit them—for a century at a time. Yes, and thither they should travel once a month (with a family) in the *waggon-lit* of a *train de luxe* with all the steam-pipes turned on. And yet there are people who like hotels. I have known some wanderers even who inhabit them from choice. Americans, too, are very happy there. Strange it is that folk can be so differently constituted. Rather would I dwell —for a life choice—in a cottage in the country on a pound a week than free in those foreign, gorgeous hostelries, where every decoration strikes you like a blow, surrounded by hard servility on fire for unearned fees, fed with messes such as the soul loathes, and quailing beneath the advancing shadow of a monstrous bill. The subject is a large one—it should be treated fitly in a

book. "Hotel life and its influence on human character" would do for the title.

I think that I must have been somewhat unfortunate in my experiences of continental travel—a kind of railway Jonah. The last time that I made this Italian journey, for instance, at two minutes' notice my fellow-voyagers and I, in the exact dead of night, were dragged from our sleeping-berths, and on the top of the Alps in the midst of the snows of winter, were transferred to an icy railway-carriage with such of our belongings as we could grasp. One lady, I remember, in her hurry, lost a valuable sable cloak. The reason alleged for this performance was that the wheels of our sleeping-car had become heated, but the conductor informed me that the real cause was a quarrel between the directors of two lines of railway. Thrice in succession, it would appear, and at this very spot had the wheels become "heated," and the travellers torn half-awakened from their berths.

On the present occasion we met with a somewhat similar experience. Leaving Basle in the hope and expectation of reaching Milan that night, at Lucerne we were informed that the St. Gothard was blocked by a train which had gone off the line. So in that beautiful but cold and expensive town we must remain for four-and-twenty hours.

Once I climbed the St. Gothard, now over thirty years ago, when a brother and I walked from Fluellen to the top of the pass with the purpose of bidding farewell to another brother who was travelling across it by coach upon his way to India. In those far-off days there was no railway, and the tunnel was not even completed. I recollect little of the trudge except that I grew footsore, and that my brother and senior by a year or two sang songs to me to keep up my spirits. About half-way up the pass we slept at some village on the road. Here the innkeeper had a pretty servant who —strange entertainment—took us to a charnel-house

attached to the church, where amongst many others she pointed out a shining skull which she informed us was that of her own father. This skull and its polished appearance I remember well; also some other incidents connected with the arrival and departure of the coach upon the summit.

Of the scenery, however, I recall little or nothing—I do not think that views have great attractions for youth, at any rate they had few for me. When I was a "soaring human boy" my father took me up the Rhine by boat with the hope and expectation that my mind would be improved in contemplating its lovely and historic banks. Wearying of this feast, very soon I slipped down to the cabin to enjoy one more congenial, that of "Robinson Crusoe," in a Tauchnitz edition. But some family traitor betrayed me, and protesting, even with tears, that "I hated views," I was dragged to the deck again. "I have paid six thalers," shouted my justly indignant parent, as he hauled me up the steamer stairs, "for you to study the Rhine scenery, and whether you like it or not, young man, study it you *shall!*" That was—*eheu fugaces labuntur anni!*—in or about 1867.

To return to the year 1900, so it came about that to all intents and purposes, the St. Gothard was to me a new experience. Therefore I was the more disappointed when on steaming out of Lucerne station we found ourselves in the midst of a raging snowstorm, so fierce and thick indeed that I began to fear that for a second time we should be stopped in our attempt to cross the Alps.

Yet that snow had its compensations, for in it the observer understood, better perhaps than he might otherwise have done, the vastness of the panorama which lay outstretched beneath him. First, all seen through that veil of flying flakes, appear forests of firs growing tier above tier upon the face of a precipice so steep that almost it might be a titanic wall. Then the pines vanish and are replaced by thousands of delicate birch-

trees, hanging like white hair about some bald, gigantic head, while beneath them roars a torrent, its waters cream-thick with snow. These vanish also as the white curtain grows too dense for the eye to pierce. Suddenly it thins and lifts, and there, far down below, appears a toy town with a toy wood-built church. Next an enormous gulf, and in its depths a torrent raging. And always a sense of mountains, invisible indeed but overhanging, impending, vast.

Now a little hut is seen and by it a blue-robed woman, signal-flag in hand. There, heedless of the bitter wind and weather she stands, like the wife of Lot, stone-still and white with snow. We rush past her into mile upon mile of tunnel, to pull up at last by some little mountain station where the drifts lie deep.

Here I beheld an instance of true politeness. Two Italian gentlemen, one old, one young, were engaged at the useful task of clearing the rails with long-handled shovels and depositing the snow in barrows for removal. Presently the younger of the pair, giving way to some sudden sportive impulse, shot a whole spadeful of snow over his companion's head. Imagine how such an unexpected compliment would have been received by the average English navvy! Next morning the police-courts would have rung with it. As it was, remembering the fiery southern blood, I expected to see knives flash in the mountain air. But not so. The older person merely coughed, shook the snow from his grizzled locks, and with a deep bow and splendid sweeping gesture—pointed to the barrow. Could reproof have been more gentle or more effective?

Beyond the tunnels to our joy the snow is much thinner, mere patches indeed, lying in the hollows of enormous bold-shouldered mountains whose steep flanks are streaked with white ropes of water, or here and there by the foam of some great fall. In the kloofs also cling lumps and lines of dense mist, like clouds that have sunk

from heaven and rested there. Down in the valley where the railway runs, begin to appear evidences of a milder climate, for vines, grown upon a trellis-work of poles, are seen in plots, and by the stream bank flourish willows, alders, and poplars. So through changing scenes we run southwards into Italy and welcome a softer air.

I have visited many cathedrals in various parts of the world, but I cannot remember one that struck me more than the interior of that of Milan, which I now explored for the first time. I say the interior advisedly, since the exterior, with its unnumbered pinnacles and thousands of statues, does not particularly appeal to my taste in architecture, such as it may be. The grand proportions of the building as viewed from within, the tall fluted columns, the rich windows, the lace-worked roof of the marble dome—an effect produced by painting, as a loquacious and disturbing *cicerone* insisted upon informing us, with many other details which we did not seek—the noble cruciform design; all such beauties are familiar to many readers and doubtless may be equalled, if not surpassed, elsewhere. As it happened, however, we found more than these, or being fortunate in the time and circumstances of our visit, to me they suggested more.

Passing the ancient door from the busy *piazza* where electric cars glide up and down continually like misshapen boats with bells fixed in front of them, and pushing aside the heavy curtain of leather, of a sudden we stood in another world. Life and death could scarcely be more different. Vast spaces, very dim, for it was four o'clock on a winter's day, full of shadow and a certain majestic emptiness. Column upon column, more than the eye could number, and above, the scarce-seen, arching roof. In the far distance of the apse something white about the sanctuary, in fact a great veil of which I do not know the use or symbolical significance, but from where we saw it first, suggesting the appearance of the white wings of some angel cherishing the altar of his

God. Then upon that altar itself twinkling sparks of light, and, swinging high in front of it, near to the towering roof indeed, like some sleepless eye watching from above, another starry lamp.

Along the vast nave, down the empty aisles creeps the stately, measured music of the organ. Now quite suddenly sweet voices take up their chant and the offering of song arises, falls to rise again, till slowly its echoes faint and die in the spaces of the dome. As we draw near through the cold and perfumed gloom, priests become visible, robed in white vestments and moving to and fro about the shrine. Others also, or may be they are acolytes, pass from time to time down through the sparse congregation into the body of the church and there vanish to right or left.

The invisible censers swing, we hear their clanking chains and perceive the clouds of incense which float upwards one by one, past the tall lights of the candles. The voices chant still more sweetly and the music of the organ sinks low as though it too were human, and knew that in such a hallowed dusk and silence it is well to whisper. The bright-robed priests, from time to time breaking in upon the ceremonial with utterances of their own that are scarcely less harmonious, move mysteriously, waving their hands like to the officers of some gorgeous, magic incantation, till at length—let him confess it—the mind of the observer softens and he understands, even sympathises with, much at which he has been wont to smile, and presently will smile again. Great is the Church of Rome, who knows so well how to touch our nature on its mystic side and through it reach the heart.

To all this solemn splendour there were but few spectators. The scanty audience of worshippers, or such of them as sat outside the choir and could be easily observed, consisted for the greater part of aged men. Among these one old gentleman—I should put his years

at eighty—attracted my particular attention. His face was still handsome and sharply cut, his short hair snow-white, and his appearance that of one who had been a soldier. Most noticeable, however, was the extraordinary earnestness and devotion of his bearing. His presence there could be no perfunctory observance, this was easy to be seen. Easy was it to guess also that this man from whom, many as they had been, the sands of life were ebbing fast, appreciated the fateful truth only too keenly, and, while time remained to him, was endeavouring with a desperate vigour, through the avenues provided by his Church, to win the freedom of a more abiding city. The whole tragic story was written there, in those upturned tearful eyes, those clasped and trembling hands upon which even in that half light the blue veins showed, and on the worn features so purified by time, loss, and sorrow that no beauty of their youth could rival them to-day. A pathetic sight indeed, rightly studied and understood, suggesting many thoughts, but one frequent enough in such places.

So farewell to Milan cathedral, its music, priests, and mystery. Farewell also to that sad old worshipper whose face I shall not see again, and who for his part will never know that the Englishman standing by his side there upon a certain winter evening took note of him and wondered.

CHAPTER II

A TUSCAN WINE-FARM

FOR generations past, visitors to Italy have written about Florence. Therefore, mindful of a certain saying, I propose to leave that noble army unrecruited. Here the reader will find no account of the architecture of its cathedrals; no list of the best pictures, no raptures over the loveliness of Giotto's Campanile—a building, by the way, that grows very much upon the observer, or at least, upon this observer—whose charm also varies more with the conditions of the light than any other with which I am acquainted.

Still a few general remarks may be permitted; for instance on the climate, which is the common property of every traveller and requires no critical training to appreciate. What a climate it is—in the month of January—or can be, for with my common evil chance it appears that we "happened on," as they say in Norfolk, the worst winter experienced in Tuscany for many, many years. Such was ever my fortune! Once I went to Iceland to fish for salmon, a country where habitually it pours, but the summer proved the driest that had been known for decades. To the ordinary traveller this would have been a satisfactory circumstance, to the seeker after salmon, which love a swollen river, it was disastrous. Other notable instances occur to me but I pass them by, for, according to the accounts of all inhabitants of the places visited, these misfortunes are common to voyaging mankind.

Within the space of a single month we enjoyed at

Florence piercing gales—*tramontane* is the local name, which reminded me of winds I have felt blowing straight off the pack ice in northern latitudes and nothing else—fogs that would have done no discredit to London in November, and rains whereof the tropics might be proud. When the *tramontane* in its glory leaps and howls along the dusky streets of Florence, then indeed does the traveller think with a repentant affection of the very bleakest spot he knows upon England's eastern shores, yes, even on the bitterest day of March.

Is there anything in the wind line quite so deadly cold, I wonder? At least clothes cannot prevail against it, for wrap yourself up till you look like a very Falstaff and still the temperature within is that of a snow-man. To the bones it pierces, to the very marrow. Yet for generations these extraordinary Florentines built their houses without fireplaces. I remember noting the same phenomenon in Mexico City, another frigid spot; there, indeed, they swore that fires were unwholesome. Here the sole concession of a vast majority of the inhabitants to our common human weakness, consists of a *scaldino*, that is, a little pot full of glowing wood ashes which is placed under the owner's chair, or carried in any convenient fashion. Men, I gather, have not even the comfort of this instrument of joy, which among its many uses in the event of sickness, or of damp sheets, makes an excellent warming-pan. In this case it is suspended in a kind of enlarged wooden mouse-cage and plunged boldly between the blankets. Of all the domestic institutions in Tuscany, I think that the *scaldino* is most to be desired. There are others which strike me as far from admirable.

I do not wish, however, to asperse this climate, against which I may have been more or less prejudiced by the prevalent influenza, which hit us rather hard. I am instructed indeed that except for certain, or uncertain, outbursts of cold, it is really beautiful in April and May,

and even for the first part of June, after which it becomes too hot for the taste and comfort of most people. The autumns also are said to be fine.

Moreover, it is only Florence itself that is so severe. During the first few weeks of my stay there I visited some country villas, one "two mountains beyond Fiesole" (that was the local description and means very high indeed), and another on the lower slopes of the same ancient city, which is built among the hill-tops about three miles to the north-east of Florence. At each of these villas I found the most lovely satisfying sunshine, in which a man might bask like a lizard till at length the chill left his bones. There I was told that the crowning joy to the dwellers in these mansions of the blest, is to sit in golden light on their verandahs and for quite a considerable portion of the winter look at a damp, dark cloud far below, which cloud is Florence hid in icy fog. Decidedly a villa at Fiesole, where the mists cannot creep and because of its sheltered position the *tramontane* has no power, is a possession to be coveted—far above a palace on the Arno.

Yet when the winter voyager can forget the climate, what city has greater charm than Florence, if to some, its note seems one of melancholy? Here, so pervading is its presence, history seems to press upon the student with an actual sense of weight. The numberless churches, some of them still unfinished; the cold, stately palaces; the public buildings and *piazzas;* the statues, monuments, and pictures; all things distinguishing and distinguished belonging for the most part, as they do, to a single century, seem to bring the dead time and those who shaped it as it was, so near to us that in its shadow the present is made mean and dwarfed. All the intervening generations that the locust has eaten, those dim, quite forgotten generations which once in their hour furnished the daily bread of Time, appear to drop away. In our garish modernity, wearing

no wedding garment of their art, we find ourselves unbidden guests at this banquet of the past—face to face with the age of Donatello and Fra Bartolommeo and Savonarola and the great Medici, and of the rest who lived when Florence was in flower. The effect is strange. Perhaps it does not strike the Italian thus, or even those foreigners who are constant residents. Perhaps in this case also, such as seek find, and the period which gave Florence her glory, is the period which oppresses us now that her sons are no longer mighty preachers, painters, or architects.

Why is it? Who can explain the mystery of the change? Why, when we look into a picture or sculpture shop on the Lung' Arno, for instance, do we see on the one side replicas of the famous and beautiful antique; and, on the other, marbles indeed, but what marbles! Simpering children in frilled dresses; young women with their nudity accentuated by means of bathing drawers; vulgar-looking busts of vulgar-looking men; coy creatures smirking at butterflies seated on their naked arms or bosoms, and other sculptured delights. But never a work that has a spark of the old Promethean fire, which elevates its student, or moves him—at any rate as art should move.

Of painting and buildings is it not the same? Where has the genius flown and will it ever return? I know the fashion is to decry our modern English art, and doubtless much of it is poor. Yet so far as my small experience goes, that art has, at any rate in some instances, more truth and spirit than any other of the day which I have found abroad.

I have said that I will not discourse upon the art treasures of Florence. Still I may be permitted to mention two, by no means of the best known, which perhaps impressed me most among them. Of these one is a certain life-sized Annunciation by Donatello, fashioned of a dark-coloured freestone, cut in high relief and set

Photo: Edne. Alinari

TOMBSTONE OF THE CARDINAL LEONARDO BUONAFEDE

into a very gloomy wall of the church of Santa Croce. It was, I believe, one of the master's earlier works, but looking at it I wondered whether he ever fashioned anything more beautiful. The Virgin is of a somewhat modern type of face, with rippling hair parted in the middle; indeed I can remember a lady who might have sat for a model of that statue. As for the exquisite grace of her pose and shape, or that of the angel who bends the knee to her, to be understood they must be seen. Description here is hopeless; I can say only that in my case at any rate they affect the mind as does the sight of same perfect landscape, or of a lovely flower breaking into bloom.

What imagination also is comprised in the Virgin's pose. She has risen from her seat and her left hand clasps the book she reads. Her robe has caught upon a corner of the chair so that her mantle is strained tight. What under ordinary conditions would be a woman's first instinctive thought? Doubtless to free it with the hand that was disengaged. But no—the message has come to her—the Power has fallen upon her, and that hand is pressed upon the heart wherein It lies. There is much else that might be said of this true masterpiece, but let an artist say it, not one merely of art's most humble admirers.

The second work that struck me pre-eminently, although in a fashion totally different, is in the church of Certosa di Val d'Ema. It is by Francesco da Sangallo, and represents in white marble the body of the Cardinal Leonardo Buonafede, who died in 1545, as laid out for burial. Not an attractive subject it may be thought, this corpse of an old, old man. Yet with what power and truth is it treated; those full, somewhat coarse features are instinct with the very dignity of death. There before us is the man as his mourners laid him upon the bier centuries ago—every line of his wrinkled face, every fold of the flesh that after serving him so

well has failed him now. It is a triumph of forceful portraiture.

The old monastery where this statue lies, and with it others almost as perfect, is a strange and lovely place. Inhabited by a few ancient monks who, under the Italian law, abolishing the religious establishments, are, I believe, not allowed to recruit their numbers; a vast pile of rambling buildings fortified for defence, it stands supreme upon a cypress-covered hill. Its interior with the halls, chapels, crypts, and columned galleries need not be described. Indeed, quaint as they are, there is something better here—the view from certain windows and cloisters.

This prospect is quite unlike any that I have seen in other parts of the world. Perhaps some of the high uplands of Mexico, with their arid, aloe-clothed soil, go nearest to it in general character and colouring, though that is not so very near. The prevailing colour-note of Tuscany, in winter, is greyness. This tone it owes chiefly, though not altogether, to the sad-hued olives which clothe its slopes and plains, broken here and there by rows and clumps of tall and gracious cypresses, standing sometimes, and thus they are most beautiful, upon a mountain ridge clear-cut against the sky. Let the reader visit any good art-collection and study the backgrounds of old Florentine pictures. There he will find these same cypresses. So grey and hueless, though so strangely charming, is the scene indeed, that the eye falls almost with rapture upon the vivid patches furnished by a species of rosy-twigged sallow which grows in the damper bottoms. Considered from above these sallows look like no bush or tree; they are as little golden clouds that have fallen from heaven to melt upon the earth.

Other peculiarities of that wide stretch of plain and mountain-slope are its lifelessness and silence. Were this England, or even Africa, birds great and small, animals also, would be audible and moving. But here, nothing.

Not a note, not a beating wing, not even the white scut of a rabbit. So far as small fowl are concerned the explanation is easy; they form one of the favourite articles of Florentine food. In every eating-shop, thrust through with a skewer, may be seen their tiny bodies separated from each other by squares of toast or bacon.

I remember that a man in front of the cathedral offered to sell me a bundle of dead birds which I examined. They included robins, thrushes, blackbirds, goldfinches, and jays, taken, most of them, with birdlime. Needless to add of these birds the jays, which I should have imagined uneatable, were the only ones that ought to have been killed. What is the result? In a long walk through wooded country in the neighbourhood of Fiesole, although I kept my eyes open, I saw but one small bird, which was so wild that it would not let me get near enough to distinguish its species. Just before that rare event I had met a sportsman with a double-barrelled gun and shortly afterwards I heard a shot. Probably this last little bird is now no more. No wonder that Browning was anxious to get back to England in April—

"Oh! to be in England now that April's here"—

living as he did in a country where scarcely a songster is left to greet the spring. How thankful should we be for our English birds, which add so much to the innocent happiness of our lives—the sparrow always excepted, and even he is welcome in a town. In the garden of the old and rambling house where I stayed in Florence lived some of these sparrows, and two cherished pairs of blackbirds, which I used to contemplate from my window. Also there were sundry stray cats, and sometimes I wonder if those birds will ever see the autumn. May St. Francis (he of Assisi) protect them.

I think that it was on the day of our visit to Certosa, where by the way, as I have neglected to mention,

the monks make excellent Chartreuse, that I became the proud possessor of a bronze crucifix and two hanging lamp-holders, which I discovered in a small curiosity-shop. These articles, with a bell which I did not purchase, were part of the furniture of the ancient chapel of a private family which has become extinct—that of the Cardinal Luperelli-Pitti in Cortona. Thus they found their way into the market. They are, I imagine, sixteenth-century work, though here I may be mistaken, as I can judge only by such knowledge of Dutch brass as I possess. It is possible, indeed, that the raised medallions of the Father, the Virgin, St. John and St. Mary Magdalene, at the four extremities of the cross, may show a somewhat earlier date.

My reason for mentioning these articles, however, is because of the great elegance of the shape and workmanship of the lamp-holders, whereof unfortunately I can give no idea in words, and the quaintness of the little figures suggestive of embryonic angels to which are fixed the hanging chains. Why, I ask, cannot such antiques be taken as models for the church furniture of to-day in England? Any churchwarden or clergyman will know how extraordinarily difficult it is to procure lamps of really handsome and pleasing design.[1] Yet it rarely seems to occur to makers to copy those which were fashioned in times when even the manufacturer of useful brass-work was not ashamed to be an artist.

Unhappily it is not in the case of church-fittings only that such a state of affairs prevails, especially in this matter of lamps. A year or two back I remember searching the entire stock of a great London establish-

[1] In the church at Heacham in Norfolk may be seen a set of hanging lamps presented to it by Mr. Neville Rolfe, the British Consul at Naples. These beautiful pierced holders are reproduced from one that hangs in the sanctuary of St. Mark's Cathedral at Venice. Their design is well worthy of the attention of any who desire to follow Mr. Rolfe's excellent example, and provide an English church with lamps that are as serviceable as they are satisfactory to the eye and taste.

BRASS LAMP-HOLDER FROM THE CHAPEL OF THE FAMILY LUPERELLI-PITTI IN CORONA

(The chains have been set further apart since purchase)

ment before I could procure hanging lamps that were even simple and, to my fancy, of a not unpleasing shape. When in Florence itself I looked through the contents of a shop where such articles were sold, with a like result. All were florid in execution and vulgar in design.

It is the same everywhere in the case of brass-work. Thus some of my readers may have noticed the beautiful seventeenth-century chandeliers which still hang in certain of the churches of Holland—*kerk-kröne* they are called—and have noticed too how pleasingly they attract the eye, making bright points whereby it can appreciate the dimensions of those great fanes. Yet when gas became common, in very many cases these *kerk-kröne* were pulled out of the churches to be sold as old brass and replaced by cast gun-metal brackets of the most atrocious patterns. Yes, and this was done although the ancient chandeliers are capable of easy adaptation to the use of gas. As a consequence they are now becoming very rare.

Why do not the Arts and Crafts add the education of the taste of the British lamp-maker to the list of their good works? Hundreds of artists complain that they cannot make a living. Let them do as men of their profession did a few centuries ago, and direct their talents to the design and manufacture at a moderate price of really beautiful articles for common use. So shall their generation rise up and call them blessed. Perhaps, however—I have heard as much suggested—the generation as a whole prefers things as they are.

One day I accepted the kind invitation of a gentleman who lives on the mountain about four hundred feet above Fiesole, the ancient Etruscan city that preceded Florence, to inspect his vineyard, where he manufactures wine for the English market. The view from this farm is very fine, including as it does Florence spread out like a map far below and an enormous stretch of country dotted with villas, farmhouses, and even ancient castles that in past ages have been the scene of siege and sack.

This expanse is divided into hundreds of vineyards and olive orchards, broken here and there on the slope of hills with patches of oak scrub which is used for firewood. My host's farm is approached up a steep and constant incline that winds through a large wood of cypress trees, sombre but graceful in appearance, although in most instances disfigured by the local habit of trimming off the boughs as high as possible. This is done under the impression, which I believe to be erroneous, that it improves the timber. At any rate it does not improve its beauty.

The farmstead itself is very ancient, some parts of it dating back to the fourteenth century. Indeed everything here is ancient. It has a pretty little court or *cortile* with graceful arches round about it, adorned in the centre with an old effigy of a lion in stone, which was dug up somewhere in the neighbourhood. In front of this court is a well nearly a hundred feet deep—probably Etruscans drew their water here. Looking downwards I could see the ripple on the face of the pool which shows where the spring flows that has fed it for so many centuries. The well has this peculiarity also—that it can be approached for the drawing of water at two distinct levels, the lower having an arched entrance of its own which opens on to a terrace twenty feet or more below. Another remarkable feature of the house is a very massive wooden roof covering the apartments now used as sitting-rooms.

Few of these wine-farms seem to be large. My host's, I gathered, is of the common size, some twenty acres under vines and olives, excluding such portion as is still unreclaimed and as yet produces nothing but scrub and stray cypress trees. There is absolutely no live stock on the place beyond a horse and a cow for domestic use, such carting as may be necessary being done with hired ox-wains, picturesque in appearance, but slow and cumbersome in practice.

As I saw it, this is the process of preparing land for vines. A suitable area having been chosen on the steep

slope of a hill facing south-east, which seems to be the aspect preferred, the shale soil, mixed with what looked to me like light loam covered with a good spit of turf, is trenched to a depth of a little over three feet. First a foot or so of broken rock is laid in the bottom of the trench for drainage before it is filled up with the soil and turf. This is the most important requisite. More than twenty years ago at Pretoria in the Transvaal I remember, by the way, making a little vineyard on a very similar soil and in a very similar fashion; only labour being scarce and inefficient, I did not trench nearly so thoroughly.

Our host is now planting vines of a Burgundy character, setting them as cuttings at a good distance from each other. These take from three to four years to come into full bearing. American vines are much sought after in this part of Tuscany because of their supposed quality of resistance to the attacks of phylloxera, which dread disease is the blackest cloud on the horizon of the Italian grape-grower. These, however, seem very difficult to obtain of good and true stock, owing apparently to the existence of Government regulations prohibiting the importation of foreign vines, trees, or flowers.

Not satisfied with the ample drainage provided at the roots and by the natural slope of the land, stone channels are laid upon the surface to carry off flood-water. Vines, it has been proved, are very fastidious as to their supply of moisture, although in some seasons of drought they are much helped by irrigation where this is practicable. What they dislike more than anything, however, as indeed I have noticed in English glass-houses, is stagnant water at the roots. The other requisites to a successful cultivation of the grape in this part of Italy are that the soil should be dug annually between the rows, and artificial manures, such as nitrates and phosphates, applied in suitable quantity.

In the older vineyards below this house many olive

trees grow among the vines, but my host informs me that they are unremunerative. A great number of these trees were destroyed during November in the following curious fashion. First fell a heavy rain, which was succeeded instantly by a fierce frost that coated every bough with ice. The trees could not bear the weight, and in many instances snapped in two or lost their largest boughs, a mutilation which was often shared by the young firs. I noted this destruction on my walk up to the house, and ignorantly jumped to the conclusion that a tornado had visited the district. On this farm the olive trees which were slain thus are not to be replanted.

The actual vintage, which of course answers to our harvest, occupies a few days only, nearly one hundred hands being employed upon this small acreage, so that the grapes may be got off when they are exactly ripe. Here it is that the wine-farmer must show judgment and even courage. The grapes ought not to be gathered before they are ripe. But if wet weather chances to come on then so that they cannot be handled, they crack and great damage is done. Therefore the temptation to begin the vintage too soon is considerable.

Once plucked the grapes are brought up to the house in hired ox-waggons, there to go through the various processes of pressing. When this is completed the wine is stored for a while in huge vats holding I forget how many hundred gallons, but I think about a thousand. There it remains for a certain period. Then it is drawn off into other casks and kept for three years or so, after which the produce of this particular vineyard goes to the English market. My host informed me that it is quite a mistake to suppose that the red Italian Chianti will not travel and keep without undue alcoholic fortification. The new wine has this weakness, not so the old. That there are limits to its keeping qualities I can, however, testify. Long ago I remember my father producing from his cellar some flasks of Italian wine, which he had

imported when on his wedding tour to Rome some forty years before. I never tasted better vinegar.

To return, my host finds that he can make a fair profit on his Chianti by charging eighteen shillings a dozen for it delivered in London. At least this was so, but since Sir Michael Hicks-Beach has increased the duty on light drinking wines there is a different tale to tell. As regards the quality and character of the wine, although it cannot compete with high-class French clarets, it is very sound and agreeable to the palate. Above all, it is pure grape-juice and nothing else.

On the day of my visit some men, about four or five, were employed in the wine-cave washing the flasks with successive rinsings of soda, acid, and water hot and cold. This careful cleansing was preparatory to the wine being bottled for shipment, really bottled with corks, not with oil poured into the neck to exclude the air, and a piece of pink paper, according to the local custom. These flasks or *fiaschi*, which are very pretty, and half covered with reed netting, cost about a penny halfpenny apiece, but I noticed that a good percentage of them break in the washing. Hence the term "fiasco" used in our sense; or, to be quite accurate, it is derived from the breaking of a full wine-flask when lifted by the neck.

A supplementary product of the farm is olive oil, that is ground out by the help of an ox which walks round and round and drives a simple crushing-mill. The raw resulting oil is divided into three grades or qualities, of which the second is best for lamps, and the third, mixed with water is used by the poor. This season the olive harvest was a very bad one, consequently oil is dear.

As regards the profit of such vineyards, my host seemed to be of opinion that a man of energy and intelligence, taking one year with another, in the absence of phylloxera, can make about ten per cent. upon the capital invested. Other experienced vine-growers, how-

ever, told me that they consider this estimate too high. Then comes the question of the capital itself. Even in the case of a vineyard of moderate size I gather that the amount required is considerable. The farmer may begin on less, but if he wishes to earn a living out of his labour, it seems that he ought to be able to command about £5000.

The item of labour in the neighbourhood of Florence is not heavy, the men, who are docile and willing, being paid only about eight shillings a week. They decline, however, to work in wet weather, nor are they very strong, living as they do upon poor and insufficient food, and at times in their fireless hovels suffering severely from the cold.

The result of my investigations into the prospects of the Tuscan wine industry is that, on the whole, I should not recommend it to young men seeking new lands in which to farm. The capital required seems too considerable and the margin of profit too small. Moreover there is always the possibility of phylloxera to be reckoned with. Still, for those to whom considerations of health or other private reasons may make residence in a sunny climate under a foreign flag desirable, who at the same time do not wish or cannot afford to lead an idle life, the occupation would be excellent. To live beneath those sheltering hills, to feast the eyes upon that glorious view, to watch the vines put forth their tender leaves, to see the tiny clusters form and in autumn to gather the rich harvest all in the glow of a glorious sun—what more could be asked by the man of quiet, contemplative mind, who yet loves not to be idle? Or, at the least, what more is he likely to get in this hard world?

CHAPTER III

FIESOLE AND FLORENCE

ONE bitter night at moonrise I stood near to the highest point of the mountain of Fiesole and looked down upon the wide valley in whose lap lies Florence, far down across lines of solemn cypresses and grey groves of olives to the vast plain beneath. Cold and dead-coloured appeared old Fiesole, now that the sun had left it; cold, yet lovely, with a death-like loveliness, the vague and stretching landscape. And Florence herself, that great city, how small she seemed at this distance of some few miles! Her towering palaces of huge stones were but as huts, the vast dome of her cathedral as that of a village church. The landscape dominates and dwarfs her. The sweeping circle of black hills; that mighty mirror of the Arno flashing in the last ray of sunset—what is she compared to these? The ancient Etruscan studying that view from this very standpoint, can have felt no need of Florence to complete the scene, and were she rased now to the earth as in the middle days one of her rulers would have rased her, she would scarce be missed—from here. In fact it is the old story. These hills and plains have borne the yoke of man almost from the beginning, and yet how faint its scar! The scratches which we make on Nature's face are very shallow and soon heal. That there is nothing permanent about man and his labours, is a truism which the consideration of such a scene as this brings home. Those thousand lamps that are now beginning to shine in the streets and windows of Florence far below, will only burn—till at dawn the light of lights arises.

In the winter season, at the time of approaching night, there is something very mysterious and melancholy about this Tuscan landscape. It looks so coldly solemn, so lifeless, while one by one the stars spring out in the blue depths above.

One meets a great many funerals in Florence, all of them after nightfall. Perhaps this may be accounted for by the influenza prevailing at the time of my stay, but as a people the Florentines seem to me to have a strange fancy for parading their sick and dead in public. At the least I have not noticed so many of these melancholy sights in other cities. Very common is it, as the visitor walks down some narrow street, to hear a measured tread behind, and look round to see the brethren of the *Misericordia* at their work of mercy. These are they who, drawn from every rank of society, for more than five centuries have laid out the dead, or carried the sick of Florence to where they might be succoured. Their very appearance indeed is ominous of death and sorrow; when they come upon the sight thus swiftly it even shocks.

Their robes are black from head to foot, covering the wearer, all but his hands and feet, so that nothing of him can be seen save perhaps his eyes as they glitter through the little openings in the hood. Six of them go together, three in front and three behind, and between them is the stretcher, also arched over with black cloth. These stretchers are apt to excite a somewhat morbid curiosity in the mind of the passer-by. Watching many of them I learned at last to know, by the way the crossed straps pressed upon the shoulders of the bearers, and the fashion in which these stepped and set their feet upon the ground, whether or no they were empty or laden; also by any little movements of the cover, or the lack of them, whether the occupant, if there should be one, was alive or dead.

From time to time the bell of the church sounds

the "*misericordia*," twice for an accident, thrice for a death. Thereon the brethren who are on duty, rise up at once wherever they may be, at dinner, at mass, in the theatre, or at their business, don their robes and go forth, not to come back until their task, whatever it proves, is done. As the first pair of them set their returning feet upon the threshold of the church they turn and give to those who follow, the ancient greeting, "May God reward you!" to receive back the salutation, "And you also!"

It is a worthy society and their work is holy, though perhaps the ambulances of a London hospital would do it better. Also here is no mere picturesque survival. One day while I stood for a few minutes near the Campanile I saw three parties of them come up to the door of the commonplace, green-shuttered house which is their habitation. Each company carried a stretcher, though whether these were empty or brought bodies thither to be coffined, I could not tell.

Who are the greatest men in the true sense that have lived since the day of our Lord? The question is difficult if not impossible to answer. Yet three names leap to my mind, all of them oddly enough connected with religion: Martin Luther, William the Silent, Savonarola. If these stars do not shine most bright among that heavenly host, I think that there are none more luminous, none at least that burn with a purer fire, none with one more immortal.

Of the three Savonarola has always fascinated me the most, perhaps because a man instinctively gives reverence to an abnegation and a nobility from which he feels that his own weakness would have locked him. We worship the crown of thorns we dare not wear. Savonarola was no pale-blooded monk, no mere shadow of a man, but one to whose ears the world had a siren voice. He could love and he could suffer, and finally take up his cross not because he had loved and suffered, not that its grinding weight might cause him to forget his worldly smarts, but

for the high reason that the days were evil and he was called to deny himself and cure them.

Surely this man was almost a Christ without Christ's consolations and secret strength. He only saw through a glass darkly, he only knew in part. The Spirit spoke within him, but its accents were broken, imperfect and contradictory; he could not hear with any clearness; often he could not understand what he heard. At times he believed his own prophecies to be the very voice of God. At times he seems to have doubted whether they were not merely vapours arising from his harrowed soul, the fantastic smoke of his own fervid imagination fashioned to angel shapes to lead him through a gateway of the presumptuous sin. See him when the trial by fire brings him face to face with a more furious trial—that of his own faith. He had interpreted the promises literally; he taught that faith could move mountains. But had he not meant spiritual mountains? Did he really believe that the Powers of Heaven would alter the law of nature and keep the fire from peeling the skin off the flesh and burning the hair and the garments of Fra Domenico? He wavered, he hung between two opinions. Then faith conquered. The ordeal went on so far as it was allowed to go, till rain fell indeed and put out the untrodden fire, and the furious populace, baulked of a blood-feast, turning upon their prophet tortured and slew him by rope and flame.

The home of this man stands in Florence much as it was in his own day. There is the church of San Marco, an uninteresting building with the pulpit from which he used to preach, until his audiences grew so great that even the vast Duomo could not hold them. One day I attended this Duomo—that is, the cathedral—in order to witness a procession of the White Brethren. Except for the colour of their garment this order is clothed like the Brethren of the *Misericordia*, and indeed, as I believe, performs similar merciful offices outside the gates of

Florence. The occasion was a great festival, and these White Brethren, preceded by priests and banners, carrying, each of them, a lighted taper, wound about the building, to gather at last in masses before the altar. This, however, at any rate to my eye, was not the real sight. That was to see the thousands upon thousands of spectators which crowded, not the dome only, but the whole cathedral to its uttermost recesses, so densely indeed that it was difficult to move. "Thus," thought I to myself, "must this Duomo have appeared when its walls rang to the echoes of the voice of Savonarola as he rolled out his threats, and warnings upon a sinful generation, as he told of the sword of God about to fall —*Gladius Domini supra terram cito et velociter.*"

At first, however, it was in this church of San Marco that he preached, and surely the lessons of his life and death will echo from its walls down all the stream of Time.

Yet the convent moves one more. Here are the cloisters planted with roses where Savonarola used to walk; the chapter-house with its life-sized and dreadful crucifixes; the vaulted refectories where he ate his simple food among his brethren. Upstairs too is the library with its double row of supporting arches, quite plain and yet so beautiful, beneath whose centre the prophet stood to administer the Sacrament to his company while without, the furious mob of Florentine wolves clawed down the doors, snarling for his blood.

The day that we visited the place was very cold though bright, and for this reason, or some other, it was almost unoccupied. As I discovered afterwards in Palestine, it is thus that one should study such abodes. Foolish as it may be to think it, a crowd disturbs their associations and memories; sometimes even it seems to make them vulgar. So it happened that we went round San Marco alone, untroubled by guides or tourists.

The details of the convent are all known, and volumes

have been written about the paintings of Fra Angelico, many of which are so beautiful and yet so simple, that they might well be visions of heaven and its inhabitants seen by some spiritual child. On the walls of many of the cells the patient Brother painted one of them, and had I been destined to dwell there I should have blessed his name. When a man has nothing else to look at save white walls, a picture in blue and red and gold by Fra Angelico would fill the mind with rapture. Only sometimes I should have wished to move on a little and study the next design.

Of all these narrow, white-washed apartments, however, that once were the home of passionate and earnest men, wrestling their way to heaven by a thorny, doubtful path, long-forgotten dust now, every one of them, those that most fix the mind and fascinate the imagination were the abode of Savonarola. From the cloisters without the visitor sees two little windows, each a few feet square. At the end of a long passage on the upper floor are the apartments, not larger than an ordinary dressing-room, to which those windows with their massive hanging shutters give light, a place to sleep and a place to sit. Here the pious visitor who is of that mind, through the mere fact of visiting them obtains—or obtained by the decree of Pope Leo X., who flourished at the beginning of the sixteenth century—"an indulgence of ten years," whatever that may mean. The inner cell contains a copy of an ancient picture of the hanging and burning of its greatest occupant upon the *piazza*. It is very much a work of fancy, representing in a stiff, conventional manner the three poor corpses hanging each to its cross while the fire curls around them, and little knots of spectators strolling about unconcernedly over the expanse of the great square. Very different, I imagine, was the real scene when the place was packed with thousands of excited onlookers. There they watched and shouted while the mighty martyr

whose blood was indeed a seed of righteousness, with his disciples was stripped of his robes by the brutal Dominicans, traitors to their most famous brother, and with due pomp and form publicly degraded by the bishop of Vasona.

"I separate thee from the Church militant and triumphant," cried the bishop, exulting over his fallen foe.

"Not from the Church triumphant, that is beyond thy power," through all the ages rings the answer of the dying prophet.

Then the yells of the mob, the last dread scene of death prolonged to its uttermost, the crackling of the eager pyre, the flames blown out straight like a banner by a sudden gust of roaring wind, the shouts of "A miracle! a miracle!" and as the wind passes and the fire gets to its destroying work again, the sound of the sobbing of the Piagnoni and the sight of their tears which fall like dew.

Even this copied painting is old now, so old that the worms are busy, as the tiny holes and little piles of white dust upon the frame testify. I pointed this out to the custodian, and suggested that paraffin skilfully applied might prolong the life of the panel, but he only shrugged his shoulders. Doubtless he thought that it would last his time—after that others could see to it.

The outer place is that where Savonarola sat and worked for years. Here he wrote his notes for the sermons which shook the world, his commentaries upon portions of the Bible in that tiny illegible handwriting, and his treatise against the trial by fire. Here hangs the robe in which he went to torture and execution, that same robe whereof the Dominican stripped him. Here too are kept his hair-shirt, the rosary which his long nervous fingers must so often have counted as he bent over it in prayer, and his Bibles. The curious chair in which he was wont to sit is here also, with

an exact copy of his deal desk — the original has crumbled away—and beneath it a platform of some more enduring wood worn by the shuffling of his feet.

There on the wall is his portrait, the strong, large-nosed, thick-lipped face framed in a black hood, so ugly and yet so fascinating. One feels that the owner of this face might easily have become a sensuous brute, and yet by the grace that was given him he became one of the greatest of saints. The flesh was trodden down, the spirit triumphed. Yes, and in this spot it seems to live on. Something of the atmosphere which environed Savonarola, something of the essence that inhabited him, appears to occupy the place which he himself inhabited. His breath is about those ancient walls, his prayers, so strangely answered, yet echo round them. To some at least it is not hard to imagine that his ghost or its reflection still dwells there. It is a chamber to leave with a bowed head and a humble heart.

The palace of the Signoria is surmounted by a famous and beautiful tower of wondrous architecture that soars I forget how many hundred feet into the air. Quite near to the top of this tower the visitor, who has the breath to climb it, is shown a tiny prison with a stone seat and a single slit to furnish it with light and air, through which, looking down, he may see the church of Santa Croce. Here for some forty days Savonarola was incarcerated, and hence from time to time he was led down to the torture which his frail flesh could not bear. Here too, whenever his agonies were abated, he wrote some of his last commentaries. What a picture this monk must have presented as he dragged his crushed and twisted limbs from the torment-place of the Bargello, up those countless stairs to lay his poor head down upon the stone while the great bell of Florence boomed out the hours of the night above him.

Below in this same palace is that gorgeous apartment known as the Hall of the Five Hundred. When some years before Savonarola urged its enlargement to a size which would allow it to contain two thousand citizens, his spirit of prophecy did not tell him that here he would be tried and condemned, that here also he would pass some of the latest and most holy hours of his life. In this great chamber for the last time, or rather the last before the last, the master and his two disciples, Domenico and Sylvestro, met after their forty days of torment, each of them having been assured that the others had recanted and betrayed them. Here then Savonarola prayed with them, counselling them to submit to doom meekly but bravely; here he blest and bade them farewell. What a subject for the hand of an artist! But he should be a great artist.

One day I paid a visit to the kind and fortunate possessor of a certain most ancient and beautiful villa on the lower slope of the Fiesole mountain. It is a vast building with great cool rooms, on the walls of one of which is frescoed the portrait of some one's pet dog that died hundreds of years ago, and beneath it a touching epitaph. The building is old indeed, for its history can be traced since the year nine hundred and odd, and the family from whom the present owners bought it, held the property for over five centuries. In the garden, also, is the very well used by Boccaccio as the gathering-place where his gay party of gallants and their ladies, flying from the pest in Florence, wiled away the heat of a summer day by telling to each other stories. Were those Arcadian tales written and published in this year of grace almost might they earn their author six weeks in gaol and the opportunity of posing as a martyr to the zeal of Puritans. As it is they are classics; therefore, like the masterpieces of Queen Margaret of Navarre and of Rabelais, they may circulate unafraid.

Perhaps the most beautiful thing, however, about

this beautiful house is the prospect which it commands, for from its verandahs in clear weather can be seen a stretch of no less than thirty leagues of hill, plain, and valley. On the whole, I think that my most pleasing recollection of Florence and its neighbourhood is this white and ancient villa and the marvellous landscape which lies beneath and around it for miles on miles.

CHAPTER IV

POMPEII

It is the fashion of Englishmen to decry their own customs and institutions. How common it is, for instance, to hear our system of railway travelling compared unfavourably with that of other countries; and yet in what foreign land does the traveller meet with half the comfort, assistance, and civility that he finds at home? Take the question of luggage. Theoretically the fashion of booking may be perfect; in practice, at any rate in Italy, it means that you lose your portmanteaus. Under our despised habit of labelling, on the other hand, during many years of travel I have never as yet lost a single article. Again, consider the much-vaunted warming of trains. All I can say is that for my part far, far rather would I travel in the coldest compartment than in the heated infernos with every air-hole hermetically sealed, that are fashionable in the continental corridor-carriages. Then the porters. Is there a more civil being than the average English porter, and one more contented with a very humble fee? Compare him with the gentleman of his profession across the Channel. Sometimes, moreover, these simply are not, the passenger must carry his own things or leave them behind; and seldom is one met with who does not grumble at his fee however ample.

As a specimen journey our own from Florence to Rome is one to be remembered. First, as usual, we were penned up like sheep. Then by dint of bribery, as we were informed that the train would be full,

my nephew was smuggled on to the platform to secure two seats. Having got their money those who accompanied him did not return. In the end indeed, no porter being available, a lady who had come to see me off and I were personally obliged to drag a considerable number of heavy articles for a distance of over a hundred yards just as the express was about to start. It was crowded, the habit upon most foreign railways being to run as few trains and furnish them with as few carriages as possible. In this one there was not a seat to spare, but the overcrowding was nothing in the scale of discomfort compared to the heat, which I should imagine cannot have registered much less than ninety degrees. We ventured to open a window in the corridor, whereon instantly a fellow-traveller sprang up, rushed and shut it with a slam. Yet these are the people whose houses throughout their bitter winter are innocent of fires. I can only conclude that here we discover a tribute to the frugal mind. The warmth in the railway carriages costs nothing, it is included in the fare. Therefore they absorb as much of it as possible.

The end of this particular journey was as wretched as the beginning. Half-way to Rome, in conformity with my common experience, a train went off the line in front of us, and so at some wayside place we were delayed for hours, the English among us marching up and down the platform in the biting cold to escape the airless heat within. Finally, instead of the scheduled time of eleven at night, we arrived in Rome at something past three in the morning—without on this occasion, I am proud to say, losing any of our luggage.

Rome! What is the chance visitor who sees it for the first time to say of the Imperial City? Silence is best. What struck you most there? people are fond of asking. Well, for my part, everything struck me, not forgetting the fearful weather which it was our fortune to encounter. During the first day that I was in Rome,

it rained in torrents, snowed and thundered, while the atmosphere was that of an ice-house. No wonder that there were I forget how many tens of thousands of people down with the influenza, a company to which presently I added one more humble unit.

But what struck me most? Well, one or two little things, for in the words of Herodotus, of the great ones out of the scantiness of my experience I do not consider it "lawful to speak." In the Colosseum, opposite to the place where the Cæsars sat on days of festival and slaughter, and if I remember right, in the neighbourhood of that occupied by the Vestals, is an avenue, or entrance, which was called, I think, the Triumphant Way. By it, we were told, the gladiators marched in before they crossed the arena to give their famous salutation to the emperor, that same salutation which, unconsciously perhaps, day by day from the beginning to the end of Time the whole creation renders to its Creator, "Those about to die, salute thee!" Their "triumphant" feet must have trod upon a long-vanished wooden flooring. Beneath this floor ran a dark passage—one can see it to-day—along which, within some few minutes of time, the bodies of many of them were dragged by iron hooks fixed in their flesh to certain vaults, where they lay till it was convenient to be rid of them.

That struck me—the contrast between the living men, splendid lusty animals, the muscles swelling on their limbs, the fire of fight in their keen eyes, the harness clanking as they walked, and the limp, gashed, senseless corpses which presently the slaves dragged thence to the last oblivion. Between the one and the other was but the thickness of a single plank. One wonders if they understood, if they foresaw. Perhaps, probably not, for if so they would have been unmanned, their steel nerves must have turned to water, they would not have given satisfaction to their patrons. No,

as it is with us to-day, doubtless each of them hoped and believed that he would be the victor. That he would stand over the conquered enemy of the combat, who perhaps for years had been his own companion, watching, while eighty thousand voices roared their plaudits, for the movement of the Vestals' thumbs. Watching—for this hour—from above, not from below.

Then the catacombs. Who that has imagination and a heart can fail to be moved by these? The smell of that hot damp air clings long about the nostrils; I do not think that I shall ever be quite free of it. Those narrow, tortuous passages, whole furlongs of them, and on either side rising tier above tier, the *loculi* containing each a body, or what is left of it, of some early professor of our faith shut in behind three or four rough tiles. On some there is a symbol, on some an epitaph daubed in various-coloured paint, on some a name. I noted one particularly—*Flora*. Who was the girl Flora, I wonder, and what part did she play in that huge and blessed tragedy, what humble, quite forgotten part? What a life also must these poor innocents have led who crowded into those darksome burrows, to worship while they lived and to sleep when life had left them, often enough by the fangs of a wild beast, the sword of the gladiator, or the torment of the tarred skin and the slowly burning fire. Truly these were faithful unto death, and as we are taught and hope their reward is not lacking. Think of the scene in the catacombs of San Sebastian. It was, I believe, during the persecution of Diocletian that a vast mob of them were shut up here, men, women, and little children, to starve in the sweltering heat. They still show the staircase where at length the legionaries came down. The rest can be guessed. "Thy slaughtered saints, O Lord!"

A tile of one of these *loculi* was loose. I moved it surreptitiously, and thrusting my taper to the hollow, looked in. There was the Christian as he had been

entombed, or rather his bones, sunk in a soft grey dust, the skull turned upon one side as a living person lays his head upon a pillow. Set with cement, as is very common, so that every passer-by could see, was a little glass vessel stained at the bottom with red pigment. This, said our guide, showed that it must be the grave of a martyr—the pigment was his blood. Traditions cling long but this is not so, it is but the sediment of the sacramental wine partaken of at the funeral. Yet martyrs are enough and to spare in these places. God alone knows to-day which of them died by the common sword death lifts against our race, which by the monstrous, fratricidal hand of man. Also, it no longer matters now that the slayers and the slain are at one, and judgment alone is left.

I will mention one thing more out of the multitudes that I studied and one only, and then farewell to Rome. In the sculpture galleries of the Vatican is a beautiful effigy of a woman seated in a kind of low nursing chair and suckling an infant at her breast. We were told that the model for this statue was Agrippina personifying motherhood, and the innocent-eyed baby at her breast became known to the world as Nero, the matricide. Even to-day, after all these centuries, what a hell's jest is this piece of carven stone.

At Naples the evil weather still pursued us. When we woke up on the morning after our arrival, the rain was falling in a steady torrent and thus it fell till night. Also the hotel was bitterly cold, and colder still was the Museum where we spent the day wrapped about with many cloaks. Yet it was a happy day although I coughed and shivered through its dark hours, for never before, as I think, have I seen so many beautiful things in one place.

Truly, since in any case their inhabitants would be long dead by now, we should be grateful to Vesuvius which buried up Herculaneum and Pompeii with all their wonderful treasures of art. The dwellers in those

cities were in many ways uncivilised enough. For instance the system of house-drainage, as I myself observed at Pompeii, was of a most primitive and poisonous nature, consisting apparently of a cesspool under the floor of the sitting-room. Again their monstrous and open licentiousness, of which the walls and buildings bear such unmistakable evidence, their gladiatorial shows and other of their customs, are scarcely what we should associate with civilisation as it is understood by us. In this connection, however, it must be remembered that behind the very thinnest veil of decent seeming, in almost every one of these respects Naples is as bad to-day as was Pompeii in the year of our Lord 79.

Yet what artists were these Pompeians. All the talent of the world in our generation could not produce such statues and bronzes as have been found beneath the lava of Herculaneum and the ashes of Pompeii. Therefore it would seem that high civilisation does not favour the production of the finest art. On the other hand, neither does savagery. Nor can its appearances upon the earth as in the best Greek period, the very early Egyptian period, the period under discussion and that of the Renaissance, be accounted for as in the instance of the uprising of great writers such as Homer, Shakespeare, and others, in the occasional touching of the high-water mark of human intellect by a wave of individual genius. For at such epochs genius seems to have been a common gift. It fell like a sudden rain upon the heads of all. Then like the rain it ceased, to be followed by a long period of ineffective undewed sterility. The problem is too high for me, I abandon it.

Naples, in a domestic sense, is pre-eminently remarkable for two things, its beggars, and its method of driving horses by means of a band across the nose in place of the common bit. I have never elsewhere seen this habit of harnessing. As for the beggars, so far as the traveller is concerned, they include practically the entire popula-

tion. Against him every man uplifts his hand, or rather he stretches it out. The right carriage fare for a *course*, that is, from any one point to another in the town, is 75 centimes; yet we saw ten francs extracted from a wretched American who still was followed with complaints and voluble abuse. One morning I sat at breakfast behind a massive window of plate glass which did not open. Nor was there any access to the street beyond under quite a moderate walk. Yet during the whole of that meal a sturdy youth stood without and begged of me. He knew that even if I was so minded I could not communicate to him the desired coin, because between us there was a great pane fixed, in short that his was but labour wasted. And yet he begged, his nature prompting to the act. There sat an Englishman, and he must practise his trade if only in empty, unsatisfying pantomime. In Naples every one expects a fee, generally for doing nothing, and no one is satisfied with it when received. Perhaps the cabmen, some of whom are blackmailers and scoundrels of peculiar villainy, take the palm for impudent extortion. Or should it be given to the boatmen? Of them I anticipate to tell a story.

When we reached Naples on our return from Syria my nephew went ashore to see a tradesman about some statuettes which we had purchased on our first visit, that did not appear to have reached their destinations. This he did against my advice, for the vessel was only staying two hours and the man lived near the Museum. The two hours passed, the last tug came off, eight o'clock was striking. One officer after another asked me if my nephew was on board. I said that I could not see or hear him, and at last the captain announced firmly but regretfully that he had business at Marseilles and must be going. I shrugged my shoulders but inwardly I was anxious, as Naples is not a place for a young man to be left stranded without money, of which I knew he had little in his pocket. Also he wore my only ulster and I had lent him an

umbrella! The time came to hoist the gangway and I gave him up. Just then through the gloom at a little distance from the ship I caught sight of my ulster struggling violently, and of my umbrella waving in the air. Now followed an indescribable hubbub. The figure of the lost one, with a Neapolitan hanging on to his leg, struggled from one boat into another boat whence, with a well-planted kick, he neatly floored the Neapolitan and, breathless but triumphant, reached the companion and the deck.

His tale was moving. It appears that he had been detained at the art-dealer's shop, and that the cabman who drove him to the quay, either by accident or very possibly on purpose, for one can never be quite certain of the designs of these men, took him a long way round. By the time he reached the embarking-place and had finished the usual altercation over his fare, the tug had gone, leaving him with something under fifteen minutes to reach the *Oroya*, which lay a mile or more away. Somehow, after being nearly torn to pieces, he made a bargain and got a boat, only to discover that his oarsmen either could not, or would not row at a speed needful in the situation. He coached them in the best Cambridge style, and when that proved ineffective, threatened by expressive pantomime to cast the elder of the two men into the deep, for the bellowing of the siren and the ringing of the bell on board the distant *Oroya* were sounds full of meaning to his ears.

Thus encouraged the rowers put on the pace and arrived at length within fifty yards of the steamer, whose donkey engines were now beginning to clank upon the anchor chains. But there they stopped and opened negotiations for blackmail. Whether he would have ever got on board the ship, or now be at the bottom of Naples Bay, or the hero of some other unpleasant predicament, had not an accident chanced, I know not. The accident was that while the altercation and mutual

threats proceeded the boat drifted against another boat, into which, with commendable agility, he sprang, as I have described, the Italian hanging to his leg. Thence he gained the tug and from it the steamer.

The officers of the ship told me that these incidents are common at Naples. There it is quite customary for boatmen to bring off wretched passengers just before their vessel sails, and refuse to put them on board until they receive some exorbitant ransom. In Cyprus the traveller has no need of any defensive weapon; in most parts of Palestine he is not likely to regret its absence; but in Naples, for my part, I should in future always carry a pistol to show if necessary.

How blessed is the sun after long periods of cold and wet, especially in those lands where one expects sun and artificial heat is not employed. The night before we visited Pompeii, for instance, was not a happy one for me. I was actually frozen out of the hotel smoking-room with its glass roof and a toy stove which did not burn. By way of consolation I manufactured myself some hot whisky and water with the help of a dreadful Etna that would not blow out, boiled over and took the varnish off the table (damage five francs at least, if it was discovered). Then I crept to bed and to such sleep as an incessant influenza cough would allow. It was not much, but towards morning I began to enjoy nightmares. One I remember particularly; it was to demonstrate on paper one hundred different methods of folding an india-rubber bath in five seconds of time, and fifty different methods of emptying the same without spilling a drop, under pain of being thrown living from the top of the Bargello tower in Florence. Another pleasing dream was that I was actually very ill in a dreadful hotel with no one to attend upon me except Italian waiters, who always demanded five francs before they would give you anything to drink, or ten if you were particularly thirsty. At length I woke up stiff and

aching, and there, streaming through the window, was the sun, at last—the bright Italian sun of many a romance. I could have worshipped it.

To what the books on the subject, and their name is legion, say about Pompeii I shall attempt to add nothing. For many years I desired to see this place, and when I saw it, it did not disappoint me. It is wonderful. The houses as they were, only without their roofs—very small houses for the most part. The narrow streets down which in times of storm the water ran, with the raised stepping-stones across them. The wear of the chariot wheels upon the paving, of the children's feet at the doors of school-houses, of the merchants' feet at the entrances of shops and places of business, of the priests' feet upon the thresholds of temples. The scribblings of gladiators and even of Christian slaves upon the walls. The obscene pictures and places. The fountains in the middle of the way with holes hollowed in their solid stone by the pressure of the hands of those who for six or seven centuries had leant down to refresh themselves with their waters. The casts enclosing the actual skeletons of some of the poor creatures who were overtaken in the last catastrophe. The garden-courts still adorned with statues. All these and a hundred other things were wonderful.

But how should a man see them? From place to place he walks at the heels of an attentive guide who is full of information till he grows bewildered. Here are temples, here are baths, here a theatre, a forum, a wall, a circus, a private house with the statues still standing about the court, an abode not to be described, a baker's, a silversmith's, an artist's shop, what not? All the wreckage of a city, none of the finest or most large, it is true, suddenly obliterated in the midst of its active life, a clock that has stopped, the case decayed but the works laid bare, *sui generis* — alone in the relics of the universe. It is overwhelming, to study it in detail

would take weeks, and even then who would be very much the wiser?

No, I think it is best to slip away alone as I did, and seated upon some stone or wall in the soft shine of the sunlight, to let the general scene and the unique atmosphere that surrounds it, sink into the imagination. Then where no tourist disturbs, where no *cicerone* explains, the mind may strive to re-create. Its ears may hear the hum of voices in the populous pleasure-seeking town, its eyes may see the lost thousands in their strange attire crowding down the cramped ways, till at length something of the meaning and the pathos of it all will come home.

Yet why should this place move us so much? There are scores of dead cities strewn about the world, only more stripped by decay and man. I suppose it is because of the feebleness of our fancy, that cripple who finds it so hard to stir from the little plot of time upon which it is our chance to wander. Here it has crutches, here the evidences of the departed are plentiful. We see the bread that they baked, the trinkets which they purchased. The pleasures they pursued so fiercely, the sins that were their joy, the higher aspiration that touched them at times, the superstitions before which they cowered, are written of on every ruined stone. Therefore, thus aided by these helpful props of evidence they draw near to us and we to them.

Vesuvius towering there, Vesuvius which saw it all and so much before from the very beginnings of the world, and will see so much hereafter till the end of the world, ought to stir us more, but it does not. It is a wondrous, an awe-inspiring phenomenon of Nature, no more, something above our human sympathy. But the stone hollowed by the hands of the dead, ah! that stirs. We think that if we had lived then our palms would have helped to wear the edge of the solid water-trough, and comprehend, and are sorry. By the sign of this

sharp example we remember that we too are making our faint marks upon such stones as we are fated to tread and handle. Other more imperceptible marks also upon things intangible and yet real which generations to come will look on with dull incomprehensive eyes, and though they know it not, in their own souls gather up the harvest. This knowledge makes us sympathetic, or at least I think so.

In Naples men learned in the English tongue write works on Pompeii (to them a mine of wealth) for the benefit of the traveller. One of these we purchased for half a franc at the railway station. It is infinitely more entertaining than most guide-books. Here are a few extracts:—

First of all our author is historical and tells us "it is mentioned by Pliny: a M. Erinnius, duumvir, a Pompean who was thundered at Pompeii." One wonders whether by this the author means that the duumvir was applauded at a theatre, or that he came in sudden and unexpected contact with the electric current. If so, his fate was scarcely so bad as that of Drusus, son of Claudius.

"He was in Pompeii and took his pleasure to throw some pears in the air and then received them in his mouth, when one of those fruits strangled him, stopping up his throat."

What an occupation for the son of an emperor who had apparently but just become engaged, and what size can his mouth have been! Further on our author, who by the way is too modest to record his name, describes some of the corpses found in the ashes. Here, for instance, are Nos. 39 and 40:—

"39. A young woman fallen upon her face, her head is leaned upon her arm, the coat or shift which she was covered of was brought near her head in the act of defense or fright, and causes all her beautiful naked body to be seen. Her shoulder has some trace of dress. It is still seen a lock of hair tied on her occiput.

"40. A young woman having a ring to her finger, to her foot a buskin. Her leg is admirable."

Will some scholar kindly place the god or goddess described thus darkly as "another womanish divinity of an uncertain determination"? Perhaps the fact that Neptune "on foot" is said to be leaning upon her shoulder may assist the student.

I will pass over the account of "a xystus" adorned with porticoes which protect it from the "ardours of the sun," although curiously enough "in one of the columns is the augury that was made to a girl that she may sneeze, that is pleasingly." After this no wonder that many find the customs and manners of the ancients curious and hard to understand. But to proceed. Here is an extract in a style which may be commended to the notice of art critics. It has all the necessary obscurity and can scarcely fail to impress the unlearned. A bronze is under discussion. Our book describes it thus:—

"The counterpoise represents a nice womanish bust with a covering on its head, under which are ivy leaves; she has her hair curled on her deck. She leans softly on her cheek the index of her right hand, of which the pulse is adorned with a bracelet, and she turns her head on the right. A lamp and a beak; Jupiter, radiated on a disc, leaning on the sceptre and sitting between Minerva, armed with a lame, and the Abundance, with the cornucopea, both seated."

If it involves nothing incorrect, I confess that I should much like to learn what portion of a lady's frame is referred to as "her deck."

There is, however, information as well as amusement in these pages. Thus they call attention to a *graffito* scribbled on the wall of the theatre which announces that a certain Methe, a player of farce, "*amat Chrestum corde sit utreisque*"—loves Christ from the heart, and prays that a like fate may befall others. So within two

generations of His death the Saviour had followers in heathen Pompeii even among actors.

Here is another curious inscription conceived in a very different spirit, and scratched upon the wall of the house of a certain Cecilius Jucundus: "*Quis amat valeat. Pereat qui nescit amare. Bis tanto pereat, quisquis amare vetat,*" which I may render, "May the lover flourish! Bad luck to him who turns his back on love! But to him who bars the lover's path—damnation!"

Jucundus was a banker. It is not difficult to imagine that this vigorous screed was inscribed upon the wall by some poor aspirant for his daughter's hand, to whom he had shown the door.

The old tradition was that Pompeii perished during the summer months. As our guide-book points out, however, this theory is entirely refuted by one curious little circumstance. Near the Stabian Gate in December 1889 were discovered some human bodies and a tree, which in the words of the book "was poured there, as one habitually is used to do the liquid chalk," so that "besides the impress of its thick past remained as engraved on the ashes" the remains of the leaves and of the berries.

From the cast obtained thus obscurely (which we saw) botanists were enabled to identify the tree with its leaves and fruit as a variety of *lauris nobilis*, whereof the berries do not ripen until late autumn. As these particular berries were quite ripe when the ashes covered them, Pompeii, it is clear, must have perished in the winter months.

I will confess that I leave this place with a deep professional grudge against that admirable romancer, the late Lord Lytton. Who is there of our trade that would not like to write a novel about Pompeii? But Lytton bars the way. Not that it would be difficult to find another and quite different plot. It is his title which presages failure to all who would follow in his path. Had he called his book "Glaucus," or "The

Blind Girl," or "A Judgment from Heaven," or anything else, it would not have mattered. But every one has heard of the novel named "The Last Days of Pompeii," and he who tried to treat of that city and event with the pen of fiction would certainly hear of it also. It is even possible that he might become involved in correspondence on the hoary theme of literary plagiarism.

CHAPTER V

NAPLES TO LARNACA

THE morning of our departure from Naples came, and we departed, this time very early. Long before "the saffron-tinted dawn," as I remember when a boy at school I used to translate the Homeric phrase, had touched the red pillar of smoke above Vesuvius, I was up and doing my experienced best to arouse my companion, by arranging the electric lights in such an artistic fashion that their unveiled and concentrated rays struck full upon his "slumber-curtained eyes." But he is an excellent sleeper, and the effort was a failure. Therefore stronger measures had to be found.

At length we were off, the extreme earliness of the hour saving me something considerable in the matter of hotel tips. By the time we reached the station, however, every Italian connected with the place was wide-awake and quite ready to receive the largesse of the noble foreigner. I think that I had to fee about ten men at that station, at least eight of them for doing nothing. Gratuities were dispensed to the bus-conductor who introduced us to a porter; to the porter who led us three yards to the ticket office; to an official who inspected the tickets after we had taken them; to two other officials who showed us respectively the platform from which the train for Brindisi started and the place where the luggage must be booked; to a superior person who announced that he would see the luggage properly booked, and to various other inferior persons, each of

whom prepared to carry some small article to the platform. Then being called upon suddenly to decide, and very much afraid that the said small articles would vanish in transit, I determined upon the spur of the moment to accompany them to the carriage, leaving my nephew to attend to the registration of the heavier baggage.

Even in that crowded tumultuous moment I had, it is true, my doubts of the wisdom of this arrangement, but remembering that on the last occasion when he performed this important office, the intelligent booking-clerk had managed to relieve my companion of half a napoleon, by the simple process of giving change to the amount of twenty centimes instead of ten francs twenty centimes, I was sure that experience would have made him very, very cautious. Presently he arrived radiant, having accomplished all decently and in order at the moderate expense of another few francs of tips.

"Have you got the luggage-ticket?" I asked with sombre suspicion.

"Rather," he answered; "do you suppose that I am green enough to come without it?" and he showed me the outside of a dirty bit of paper. The outside, remember, not the inside, for thereby hangs a very painful, moving tale.

Well, we started, this time in great comfort, since, except for an Italian sportsman arrayed in quaint attire, we had the carriage to ourselves. We steamed past Pompeii and Sorrento, thence for hours climbing over huge mountain ranges covered with snow, sometimes almost to the level of the railway line. After these came vast stretches of plain. Then in the afternoon we travelled for many miles along the seashore, a very lonely strand fringed with pines blown by the prevalent winds to curious, horizontal shapes, as though a gardener had trimmed them thus for years. Ultimately once more we headed inland across the foot of Italy, and

at last, after a journey of about thirteen hours, to my great relief, for I feared lest another train off the line might make us lose our boat, ran into Brindisi.

Here to our joy the local Cook was in attendance, who put us into a cab, strictly charging us to "pay nothing to nobody." He announced further that he would follow presently to the mail steamer *Isis* with the heavy baggage, for which he took the ticket.

We reached the *Isis*, a narrow, rakish-looking boat, found our cabin, and began to arrange things. While we were getting rid of the dust of our long journey I heard a voice outside, the voice of Cook, though strangely changed and agitated.

"Mr. Haggard," said the voice, "Mr. Rider Haggard."

"Yes," I answered; "what's the matter? I've paid for the passages at the office."

"It isn't the passages, it's your luggage," he replied through the door; "it's gone!"

I sank upon my berth. "Gone?" I said feebly, "gone where?"

"To Reggio," replied the mournful voice, "Reggio on the other side of Italy, where you booked it to."

"It was booked to Brindisi," I shouted.

"Oh no, it wasn't," wailed the voice, "it was booked to Reggio; here's the ticket."

"Do you hear that?" I said to my nephew, who, with his dripping head lifted from the basin, was staring at vacancy as though he had seen a ghost; "do you hear that? He says you booked the luggage to Reggio."

"I didn't," he gasped; "I gave them the tickets for Brindisi."

A horrible thought struck me. "Did you examine the voucher?" I asked.

Then almost with tears he confessed that he had overlooked this formality.

"My friend," I went on, "do you understand what you have done? Has it occurred to you that this

exceedingly thick and uncomfortable brown suit, with three flannel shirts, a leather medicine-case, and some wraps and sundries are all that we possess to travel with to Cyprus, where, such is the hospitable nature of its inhabitants, we shall probably be asked out to dinner every night?"

"We've got some cigarettes and a revolver, and you can have my dinner-jacket, it is in the little bag," he answered with feeble inconsequence.

I took the dinner-jacket at once; it was several sizes too small for me, but better than nothing. Then I expressed my feelings in language as temperate as I could command. Considering the circumstances it was, I think, wonderfully temperate.

At this juncture the voice of the patient (and most excellent) representative of the world-wide majesty of Cook spoke as though in reverie through the door.

"It is a strange thing," he said, "these sad accidents always happen to you gentlemen with double names. The last time it was to the great artist gentleman—how did he call himself? Ah! I have it. Mr.—Mr.—Melton Prior. He went on with nothing, quite nothing. His luggage too travelled to Reggio."

Enough. Let oblivion take that dreadful hour. But the odd thing is that this is the second time in my life that the said "sad accident" has happened to me. Once before, bound to the East, did I arrive upon the mail-steamer at Brindisi to find that by some pretty caprice of the Italian railway officials my portmanteaus were at Milan, or elsewhere, and that I must travel to Egypt and sojourn there in what I stood up in, *plus* the contents of a hand-bag. I remember that on this occasion my sufferings were somewhat soothed by the melancholy state of an Australian family, who found themselves doomed to voyage to Sydney with an outfit that would not have cut up into an infant's layette. Their luggage also had gone to Reggio.

As a matter of curiosity I should like to know why the Italians play these tricks with the belongings of travellers, as is their common and undoubted habit. To take the present case, it is true that my nephew neglected to study the scrawl upon the voucher, but really he was not to blame, for he gave the clerk the tickets for Brindisi, by which that functionary was bound to register the luggage. Moreover, every official in the station knew that we were going to Brindisi—a fact upon the strength of which many of them, under this pretext or that, had managed to extract something from my pocket. Yet quite calmly, although there was no press of business for we were almost the only passengers, they sent the luggage to Reggio. My own belief is that sometimes this kind of thing is done as a bad practical joke, or possibly to annoy the foreigner within their gates, and sometimes for the purposes of pillage. If this be so, the effort is eminently successful, especially when the unfortunate victim has to catch a mail for the East and must leave his effects to take their chance.

The *Isis* is one of the swift boats which carry the mail from Brindisi to Port Said. The bags leave London at nine on Friday night. By seven or eight on Sunday night they should be at Brindisi, and by Wednesday night or Thursday morning at Port Said, where the big boat awaits them.

It is very curious to see these bags come on board. Somebody announces that the mail is in, and an officer takes his station opposite the gangway at a little table on which lies a great lined and printed form, while another officer stands by the gangway itself. Quartermasters and sailors also station themselves at convenient spots between it and the mail-room. Presently there is a rumble, and a covered van drawn by a wretched-looking horse appears in the strong ring of electric light upon the quay. Attending it are an extraordinary collection of ragamuffins, of whom the use now

becomes apparent. The van is unlocked by some one in charge, and the first ragamuffin is given a sack and a tally-stick. Up the gangway he trots, delivers the tally-stick to the quartermaster at its head, who calls out the destination of each bag to the officer at the table, who in his turn checks and enters it upon the sheet. That carrier trots away to the right towards the mail-room, where he delivers his bag and descends by a second gangway to the quay for another.

Meanwhile his companions are following him like a stream of ants, each with a sack of letters on his shoulder and a tally-stick in his hand. When the tally-sticks come to the number of ten, they are placed in the section of a box that stands on the deck at the feet of the quartermaster. A hundred tally-sticks exactly fill this box, which is then replaced by another empty box. Thus an additional check is kept upon the number of the bags.

Now that van is empty and another arrives, and so on and on for hours, till at last all the mail is safely aboard, checked, and sorted. I believe that on this particular Sunday night the count amounted to something over two thousand bags, which is not very heavy. One of the officers told me that the letters, &c., in which Great Britain sent her last Christmas wishes to the East filled nearly four thousand bags. As may be imagined, the introduction of the penny Imperial post is not likely to lessen these totals.

Before the mail was all on board we were fast asleep, waking up the next morning to find the *Isis* tearing at about eighteen knots (she can run twenty-three) through a stormy sea and beneath a wet and sunless sky. By midday our course was taking us through the beautiful islands of the Greek Archipelago, to some of which we passed quite close. Here it was that we found most reason to mourn the lack of sunlight, which in this dripping weather caused even those green Ionian slopes

to look cold and grey. Amongst other places we saw that Leucadian* crag whence the Greek poetess Sappho leapt into the sea. Studying the spot I came to the conclusion that her nerve must have been almost as remarkable as her genius. Women very rarely commit suicide by jumping off a great height, especially into water. By the way, I wonder if Sappho was as beautiful as the bust in the Naples Museum, that was discovered at Pompeii or Herculaneum, I forget which, seems to suggest. Tradition describes her as small and dark, so perhaps the head is a fancy portrait by some great artist of a later age. So real and so full of life and intelligence is it, however, that whoever was its model must have been both a lovely and a clever woman. Indeed, genius seems to sit upon that brow of bronze and to look from those wide enamelled eyes.

Leaving Brindisi late on Sunday night, early on the Wednesday morning we sighted the low shores of Egypt. By eight we were steaming past the well-remembered breakwater at Port Said, very empty now on account of the war and the coal famine, and in another half-hour had cast anchor alongside the great liner which was ready to receive our mails.

Once I spent three or four days in Port Said waiting for my steamer, and may claim, therefore, to know it fairly well. Of all the places I have visited during many travels I can recall but one that strikes me as more dreary. It is a fever-stricken hole named Frontera at the mouth of the Usumacinto River in Tabasco, that can boast the largest and fiercest mosquitoes in the whole world.

However on this occasion we were destined to see but little of Port Said, since the vessel that was to take us on to Cyprus, named the *Flora*, would sail as soon as we had transhipped her mails. Accordingly, bidding farewell to the *Isis* and her kind commander, we took a boat and rowed across to the *Flora*, a small and ugly-looking vessel painted black, and belonging to the

Austrian-Lloyd. On board of her I found no one who could speak any tongue I knew, and it was with some difficulty that at last, by the help of the steward's assistant, who understood a little French, I was able to explain that we wished to proceed to Larnaca.

At the time it struck me as so odd that the English Government mails should be carried in a vessel thus distinctly foreign, that afterwards in Cyprus I inquired into the reason. It seems that the Colonial Office, or rather the Treasury, are responsible. The Austrian-Lloyd line, being in the receipt of a subsidy from their Government, were able to make a lower tender for the transport of mails than another line, owned by a British company. So notwithstanding the manifest inconveniences of employing an alien bottom for this important purpose, which in certain political conditions might easily prove dangerous, the home authorities decreed that the contract should go to the foreigner. Perhaps they thought that the sacred principles of Free Trade, or rather of subsidised foreign competition, ought to prevail even in the matter of the conveyance of her Majesty's mails.

Another thing became evident, that Cyprus is not a place of popular resort, since my nephew and I were the only first-class passengers in the ship. Unless he be a Government official, or some friend or connection of one of the very few British residents, it is not often, I imagine, that the *Flora* takes a traveller to the island. Still she provides for them, by printing a set of rules in English and hanging them on the companion. They cover much ground; in them even politeness finds its place, since the reader is reminded that passengers being "persons of education, will pay a due regard to the fair sex." Reflection, however, seems to have suggested that this axiom might meet with too liberal a rendering. At any rate, farther down we are informed with grave sincerity that "gentlemen are not allowed to enter the cabins of the ladies."

After the dull weather we had experienced between Italy and Egypt, the twenty-four hours' run of our lonely voyage to Larnaca was very pleasant, for the sun shone brightly, the wind did not blow, and the sea was blue as only the Mediterranean in its best moods knows how to be. When we got up next morning—we were provided, each of us, with a whole four-berth cabin, but the *Flora* does not boast a bath—it was to find that Cyprus was already in sight: a long, grey land with occasional mountains appearing here and there.

Onward we steamed, watching a single white-sailed bark that slid towards us across the azure sea like some dove on outstretched wings, till at length we cast anchor in the roadstead off the little port of Larnaca, a pretty town lying along the seashore. Some miles away, and to our left as we face it, rises the mountain of the Holy Cross—I think that it is, or used to be called Oros Staveros by the Greeks, and by the Latins Monte Croce, at any rate in the time of Pocock.

Felix Fabri, the German monk who made two pilgrimages to Palestine in or about the year 1480, tells how he visited this monastery and saw its relics. It will be remembered that St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, who when an old woman journeyed to the Holy Land in 325 of our era, was so fortunate as to discover beneath the alleged site of the Holy Sepulchre, the veritable cross of our Lord together with that of one or both of the thieves who suffered with Him. But of this more hereafter. The cross of the good thief who, why I know not, has been named Dysma, she is said to have brought to Cyprus and established upon this mountain. Whether anything of it remains there now I cannot say, as I made no visit to the place either on this occasion or on a former journey in the island some fourteen years ago. This is what old Felix says about it. I quote here and elsewhere from the most excellent and scholarly translation of

his writings by Mr. Aubrey Stewart, M.A., which is unfortunately practically inaccessible to most readers, as it can only be obtained as part of the Library of the "Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society" at a minimum cost of ten guineas:—

"She"—*i.e.* St. Helena—"brought her own cross, that which had been Dysma's, entire from Jerusalem to this mount, and here she built a great convent for monks, and a church within which she placed this cross as an exceeding holy relic. She ordered a chamber or closet to be built in the wall over against the altar, and placed the cross within it; and there it stands unmoved even to this day, albeit the monastery itself has long since been overthrown, even to the ground, by the Turks and Saracens, and the monks of the Order of St. Benedict who once dwelt therein have been scattered. The position and arrangement of this cross in its place is wonderful. The cross stands in a blind window, and both its arms are let into holes made in the walls, and its foot is let into a hole made in the floor. But the holes which contain the arms of the cross and the foot of the cross are large out of all proportion, and the cross nowhere touches the wall, but is free and clear from contact with the wall on every side. The miracle which is noised abroad about the cross is that it hangs in the air without any fastening, and withal stands as firm as though it were fixed with the strongest nails or built into the wall, which nevertheless it is not, because all the three holes are very great, so that a man can put his hand into them and perceive by touch that there is no fastening there, nor yet at the back or at the head of the cross. I might indeed have searched this thing more narrowly than I did, but I feared God, and had no right to do that which I had forbidden others to do. I climbed this mount to show honour to the cross, not to try whether there was a miracle or not, or to tempt God. That this cross may be the more worthy of reverence, they have joined to it a piece of the true Cross of Christ."

Felix Fabri was easily satisfied, as a mediæval monk should be. So much for the cross of Dysma.

Soon we were rowing ashore in the Government boat, a distance of three-quarters of a mile or so, for Larnaca is not a harbour, but an open roadstead—there are now no

harbours worthy of the name in Cyprus. Landing at the pier we were at once conducted to the custom-house, and explained that we had nothing to declare.

"But have you a revolver?" asked the officer.

I answered that I had.

"Then I must trouble you to hand it over," he replied. "I will give you a receipt for it, and you can claim it when you leave the island."

I looked what I felt, astonished, but obeyed. On inquiry it appeared that the Cyprus Government has recently passed some legislation as to the importation of firearms. It would seem that murders had been somewhat frequent in the island, mostly carried out by shooting, hence the law. Whether it was intended to prevent respectable travellers who purpose journeying in the mountain districts from carrying a pistol for their own protection, is another matter. Doubtless in fact it was not; but in Cyprus they have a great respect for the letter of the law, and therefore put this somewhat unnecessary query. For instance, they have another regulation—aimed, I suppose, at the exclusion of phylloxera — against the importation of seeds or plants, which has been known to work in an unforeseen manner. Thus a year or two ago a foreign royalty, I think it was the Prince of Naples, visited the island wearing a carnation in his buttonhole. His Royal Highness must have been somewhat amazed when a custom-house official leant forward and gently but firmly removed the contraband flower.

I am told that this story is quite true, but it may be only a local satire upon the kindly providence of a patriarchal Government.

It is right to add, however, that there is not the slightest need for a traveller of the ordinary stamp to carry any defensive weapon in Cyprus. Since the English occupation of the island at any rate, now some twenty years ago, no place can be more safe. In the wildest parts of it he who behaves himself has nothing

to fear from the natives, a kindly, gentle-natured race, Turk or Christian, although, as I have said, not averse to murdering each other upon occasion. But of this also more hereafter.

Having delivered up the weapon of war and been given an elaborate receipt for the same, we proceeded to our hotel accompanied by a motley collection of various blood and colour, each of them bearing a small piece of our exiguous belongings, whereof the bulk, it will be remembered, had travelled to Reggio. These folk, however, are not exorbitant in their demands and do not grumble or ask for more. Tourists have not come to Cyprus to spoil it; I never heard of an American even setting foot on the island, therefore a shilling here goes as far as five elsewhere.

The hotel at Larnaca is now I believe the only one in Cyprus. It stands within a few feet of the shore—safely enough, for the sea is tideless—is comfortable, with large, cool rooms, and absurdly cheap. I grieve to add that its proprietor cannot make it pay. No travellers visit this lovely and most interesting isle, in ancient days the garden of the whole Mediterranean, therefore there are no hotels. Once there was one at Limasol, but it failed and converted itself into a hospital. He who would journey here must either rely upon tents, which are a poor shelter before the month of April, or upon the kind and freely offered hospitality of the Government officials. Naturally this lack of accommodation frightens away tourists, which for many reasons in a poor country like Cyprus is a vast pity. Yet until the tourist comes it is idle to expect that conveniences for his reception will be provided. So this matter stands.

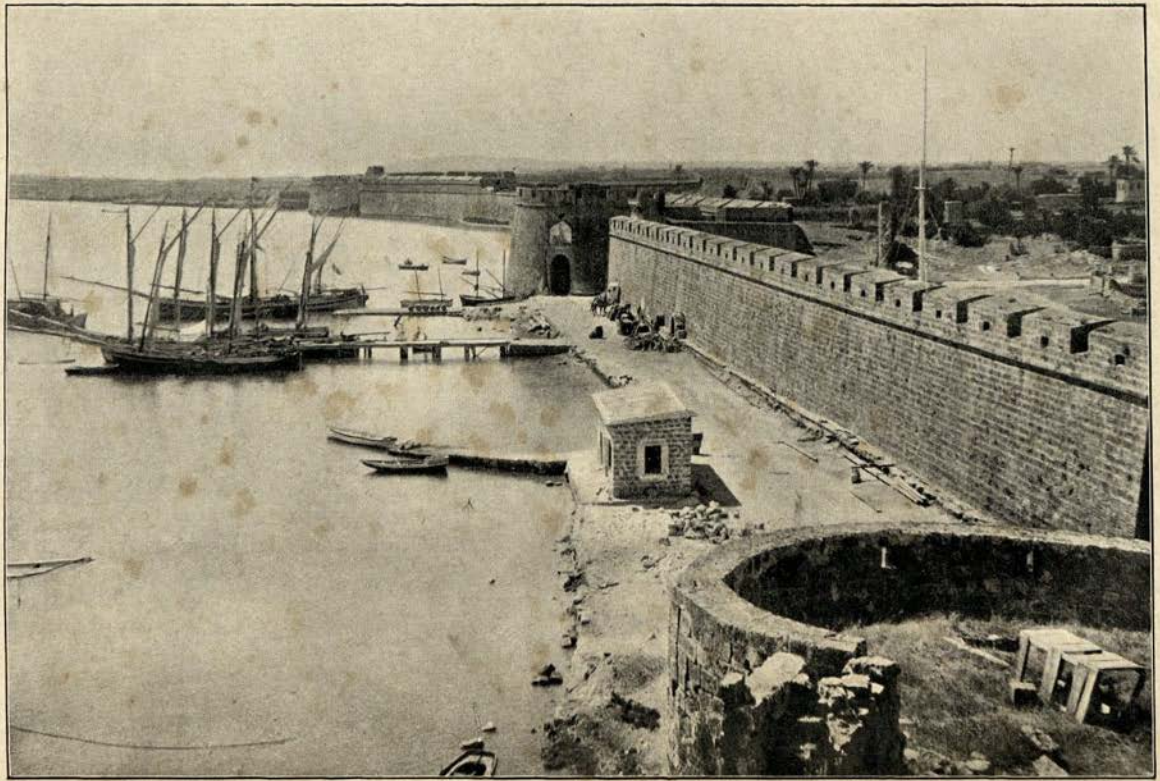
Where Larnaca now lies was once the ancient Citium, of which the marsh near at hand is believed to have been the harbour. Quite half of the present town, indeed, is said to be built upon the necropolis of Citium, whence comes its name, Larnaca, derived, it is supposed,

from *Larnax*, an urn or a sepulchre. The town is divided into two parts, Larnaca proper and the Marina along the seashore, which is reported to have been recovered within the last few centuries from the bed of the ocean.

After luncheon we went to a house whose owner deals occasionally in curiosities. Of these and all antiquities indeed the export is forbidden except to the British Museum, private digging having been put a stop to in the island, as its inhabitants aver, in the especial interest of that institution. Here we saw a few nice things, but the price asked was impossible, £12 being demanded for a set of little glass vases which I should have valued at 40s. So we left the place, richer only by an Egyptian or Phœnician spear-head of Cyprian copper, a very excellent specimen, and walked to the upper town about a mile away to take tea with Mr. Cobham, the Commissioner.

Mr. Cobham lives in a beautiful house which he has purchased. For generations it had been the abode of the British consuls at Larnaca, but was abandoned by them many years ago. Here in a noble room he has his unique collection of ancient books written by travellers during the last five or six centuries, and others dealing with, or touching on, Cyprus and its affairs. It is from these sources that its learned author has compiled the work known as *Excerpta Cypria*, which consists of translations from their pages, a book invaluable to students, but now unhappily out of print. I considered myself fortunate in being able to purchase a set of the sheets at an advanced price in the capital, Nicosia, where it was printed.

Set upon a wall of the saloon in this house and although newly painted, dating from a century and a half or more ago, is a fine, carved example of the royal arms of England. This very coat, as Mr. Cobham has ascertained, used to stand over the doors of the old British Consulate during the tenancy of his house by



CURTAIN WALL, FAMAGUSTA

the consuls. When they left it was taken down and vanished, but within the last few years he found it in a stable in Larnaca, whence the carving was rescued, repainted by some craftsman on board an English man-of-war which visited Cyprus, and after a hundred years or so of absence, returned in triumph to its old home.

Cyprus is fortunate in possessing in Mr. Cobham an official who takes so deep an interest in her history, and spares no expense or pains in attempting its record. On the occasion of my visit he spoke to me very sadly of the vandalism which the authorities threaten to commit by the throwing down of the seaward wall, curtain-wall I think it is called, of the ancient, fortified city of Famagusta, in order, principally, that the stone and area may be made use of for the purposes of the railway, which it is proposed to construct between Famagusta and Nicosia. Of this suggested, but as yet happily unaccomplished crime, I shall have something to say on a later page.

CHAPTER VI

COLOSSI

On the day following that of our arrival in Cyprus the *Flora* reappeared from Famagusta and about noon we went on board of her to proceed to Limasol, some forty or fifty miles away, where we were engaged to stay a week or ten days. The traveller indeed is lucky when he can find a chance of making this journey in the course of an afternoon by boat, instead of spending from ten to fifteen hours to cover it in a carriage. Although Cyprus in its total area is not much, if any, larger than the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, locomotion is still difficult owing to the impassable nature of the ways and the steepness and frequency of the mountains. When I visited it fourteen or fifteen years ago there were no roads to speak of in the island, except one of a very indifferent character between Larnaca and Nicosia. The Turks, its former masters, never seem to make a road; they only destroy any that may exist. Now in this respect matters are much improved. The English Government, out of the pitiful sums left at its command after the extraction from the colony of every possible farthing towards the payment of the Turkish tribute, has by slow degrees constructed excellent roads between all the principal towns, with bridges over the beds of the mountain torrents. But as yet in the country districts nothing of the sort has been attempted.

With us were embarked a number of lambs, little things not more than a week or two old, bought, I suppose, for the provisioning of the ship. At this season

of the year everybody in Cyprus lives upon lamb. It was melancholy to see the tiny creatures, their legs tied together, heaped one upon another in the bottoms of large baskets, whence, bleating piteously for their mothers, they were handed up and thrown upon the deck. A more satisfactory sight to my mind were one or two cane creels half filled with beautiful brown-plumaged woodcock, shot or snared by native sportsmen upon the mountain slopes.

On board the steamer, a fellow-passenger to Limasol, whither he was travelling to negotiate for the land upon which to establish a botanical garden, was Mr. Gennadius, the Director of Agriculture for the island. He told me what I had already observed at Larnaca—that the orange and citron trees in Cyprus, which on the occasion of my former visit were beautiful to behold, are to-day in danger of absolute destruction, owing to the ravages of a horrible black scale which fouls and disfigures fruit and leaves alike. (*Avnidia coceinea* or *Avnidia orantii*.)

For the last dozen years or so this blight has been increasingly prevalent, the mandarin variety of fruit alone showing any power of resisting its attacks. The proper way to treat the pest is by a number of sprayings with a mixture of from twenty to twenty-five per cent. of soft soap to eighty or seventy-five per cent. of warm water. A dressing thus prepared destroys the scale by effecting a chemical union of the alkali of the soap with the fatty matter in the organism of the parasite, or failing this stifles it by glazing it over and excluding the air necessary to its existence. Mr. Gennadius believes that if this treatment could be universally adopted, scale would disappear from Cyprus within a few years.

But here comes the difficulty. For three centuries the Cypriote has been accustomed to Turkish rule with its great pervading principle of *Kismet*. If it pleases Allah to destroy the orange-trees (in the case of the Christian peasant, read God) so let it be, he says, and shrugs

his shoulders. Who am I that I should interfere with the will of Heaven by syringing? Which being translated into Anglo-Saxon means, "I can't be bothered to take the trouble." If the Director of Agriculture in person or by proxy would appear three or four times a year in the sufferer's garden with the wash ready made and a squirt and proceed to apply it, the said sufferer would look on and smoke, making no objection. Beyond this he will rarely go.

Therefore unless the blight tires of attack it begins to look as though the orange is doomed in Cyprus. This is a pity, as that fruit does very well there, and the mildew which threatened it at one time was taken at its commencement and conquered by means of powdered sulphur puffed about the trees with bellows, Government distributing the sulphur at cost price.

About three hours after leaving Larnaca the vessel passes a sloping sward clothed with young corn and carob-trees that, backed by lofty peaks of the Trooidos range, runs from a hill-top to the lip of the ocean. Here once stood Amathus, a great city of immemorial antiquity which flourished down to Roman times if not later, and ultimately, it is said, was destroyed by an earthquake. Now all that is left of it are acres of tumbled stone and a broken fragment of fortress, whether ancient or mediæval I cannot say, against the walls of which the sea washes. It is told that here, or at some later town built upon the same site, Richard Cœur-de-Lion landed when he took Cyprus from the Emperor Isaac Comnenus.

Wonderful indeed is it for us, the children of this passing hour, to look at that grey time-worn coast and as we glide by to reflect upon the ships and men that it has seen, who from century to century came up out of the deep sea to shape its fortunes for a while. Who were the first? No one knows, but very early the fleets of Egypt were here. Then followed the Phœnicians, those

English of the ancient world as they have been called, who like eagles to the carcass, gathered themselves wherever were mines to be worked or moneys to be made. They have left many tombs behind them and in the tombs works of art, some of them excellent enough. Thus before me as I write stands a bronze bull made by Phœnician hands from Cyprian copper, a well-modelled animal full of spirit, with a tail that wags pleasingly upon a balled joint.

After the Phœnicians, or with them perhaps, were Greeks of the Mycenian period. Their tombs also celebrate a glory that is departed, as the British Museum can bear witness. Next to the Greek the Persian; then the satraps of Alexander the Great; then the Ptolemies; then galleys that bore the Roman ensign which flew for many generations; then the Byzantine emperors—these for seven centuries.

After this a new flag appears, the lions of England flaunting from the ships of war of Richard the First. He took the place and sold it to Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem so called, whose descendants ruled here for three centuries, till at length the island passed into the hands of the Venetians. These only held it eighty years, and after them came the most terrible fleet the Cyprian Sea has seen, that which flew the Crescent. For three centuries Cyprus groaned and withered under the dreadful rule of the Turk, till at last a few gentlemen arrived in a mail-steamer and for the second time in the history of the island ran up the flag of Britain. How long will it float there, I wonder?

It was very interesting to watch the beautiful gulls that followed the vessel off this coast, the wind blowing against them making not the slightest difference to the perfect ease of their motion. So near did they hang that I could see their quick, beady eyes glancing here and there, and the strong bills of a light pink hue. From time to time as I watched, one of them would

catch sight of something eatable in the water. Then down he went and suddenly from the feathers of his underpart out shot his claws, also pink-coloured, just as though he were settling upon a tree or rock. Why, I wonder, does a gull do this when about to meet the water? To break his fall perhaps. At least I can suggest no other reason, unless in the dim past his progenitors were wont to settle upon trees and he is still unable to shake off an hereditary habit.

At length on the low mountain-hedged coast-line appeared the white houses, minarets, and scattered palms of Limasol, with its jetty stretching out into the blue waters. The town looked somewhat grown, otherwise its aspect seems much the same as when first I saw it many years ago.

So we landed, and after more custom-house formalities, marched through the crowded streets of the little town, preceded by stalwart Cypriotes bearing our belongings, to dine (in borrowed garments) with the kind friends who were awaiting us upon the pier.

Our first occupation on the following morning was to retain the services of three mules and their coal-black muleteer, doubtless the offspring of slaves imported in the Turkish days, known to us thenceforth by a corruption of his native name or designation which we crystallised into "Cabbages." For a sum of about thirty shillings a week this excellent and intelligent person placed himself and his animals at our disposal, to go whither we would and when we would.

Our first expedition was to a massive tower, or rather keep, called Colossi, which stands at a distance of about six miles from Limasol, in the midst of very fertile fields upon the Paphos road. Off we went, my nephew and myself riding our hired mules and the rest of the party upon their smart ponies, which in Cyprus are very good and cheap to buy and feed.

I have now had considerable experience of the mule

as an animal to ride, and I confess that I hate him. He has advantages no doubt. Over rough ground in the course of an eight or ten hours' day he will cover as great a distance as a horse, and in the course of a week or less he will wear most horses down. Also he will live somehow where the horse would starve. But what a brute he is! To begin with, his fore-quarters are invariably weak, and feel weaker than they are. The Cypriote knows this and rides him on a native saddle, a kind of thick padded quilt so cruppered that he is able to sit far back, almost on the animal's tail indeed, as, doubtless for the same reason, the costermonger rides a donkey. To the stranger, until he grows accustomed to it, this saddle is most uncomfortable, but old residents in the island generally prefer to use it upon a long journey. Also it is dangerous to the uninitiated, since the stirrups are very short. Not being fixed they slide from side to side, suddenly lengthening themselves, let us say to the right, with any unguarded movement, which will produce a proportionate curtailment on the left and the unexpected consequence that the traveller finds himself face downwards on the ground. With a European saddle this particular accident cannot happen, also it is more comfortable for a short journey. As a set-off to this advantage, however, the rider's weight comes upon that portion of his steed which is least able to support it, namely the withers. The result is that the mule, especially if pushed out of its customary amble, sometimes falls as though it were shot, propelling him over its head.

It is a mistake to suppose, also, that these creatures are always sure-footed; many of them stumble abominably although they do not often actually fall. Never shall I forget my first mule-ride in Cyprus in the days when there were no roads. It was from Nicosia to Kyrenia, a distance of about sixteen miles over a mountain path. The muleteer into whose charge I was given was a huge man weighing at least eighteen stone, and I

thought to myself that where this monster could go, certainly I could follow.

In this I was right, I did follow, but at a very considerable distance. Mr. Muleteer perched himself upon his animal, doubtless one of the best in the island, looking in his long robes for all the world like a gigantic and half-filled sack, and off we ambled. Scarcely were we clear of the town when my mule, unaccustomed, I suppose, to the weight upon his withers and the European saddle, began to stumble. I do not exaggerate when I say that he stumbled all the way to Kyrenia, keeping me absolutely damp with apprehension of sudden dives on to my head down precipitous and unpleasant places. Meanwhile Mr. Muleteer, very possibly anticipating my difficulties, had been careful to place about five hundred yards between us, a distance which he maintained throughout the journey. I yelled for assistance — in fact I wished to persuade him to exchange mules—but either he would not or he could not hear; moreover he had no knowledge of my tongue, or I of his. So we accomplished that very disagreeable journey.

Once, however, I made one much more dangerous, this time over the rarely travelled mountains of Chiapas in Mexico. My companions, I remember, had excellent mules—they lived in the country; that given to me as the lighter weight was weak and poor, with no fore-legs worth mentioning. We scrambled up the mountains somehow, but when it came to descending, the fun began. A road in Tabasco, then at any rate, was made of three component parts. First, a deep and precipitous ditch worn out by the feet of generations of animals, covered at the bottom with from six inches to a foot of red butter, or clay quite as greasy as butter, down which one slowly slithered. Secondly, stretches, sometimes miles in length, of swamp land where the path consists of little ridges of hard clay about two feet apart, the space between each ridge into which the mule must step, filled with some

three feet of liquid and tenacious mud that often reached to the saddle-flap. Thirdly, when the swamps were passed great tracts of the most grizzly precipices, which to my taste were worst of all. Along these steeps the path, never more than three to five feet in width, would run across boulder-strewn and sloping rock very slippery in nature. Below yawned chasms more or less sheer, of anything from two to fifteen hundred feet in depth.

Now a mule always chooses the extreme edge of a precipice. For this reason: its load is commonly bound on in large, far-protruding bales or bags. Were it therefore to walk on the inner side of the path, it would constantly strike its burden against the cliff, so, not being troubled with nerves, it clings to the outer edge. A common result is that in going round a corner it meets another mule proceeding from the opposite direction. Thereon in the attempt to struggle past one of the pair vanishes into space and with it the load, merchandise or man.

On this particular Mexican journey I very nearly came to a sudden and untimely end. The mule will not go your way, he always goes his own. At one point in the precipice path it forked, the lower fork being rough but safe and solid, the upper, which travelled round some twenty yards and then again joined the lower, smooth but exceeding greasy. The mule insisted upon taking the top road, with the result that when we reached its apex he began to slide. Down we shot, ten or fifteen paces to the very edge of that awful cliff and, I confess it without shame, I have rarely been in such a fright in my life. Indeed I thought that I must be gone, there seemed no help for it, since to dismount was quite impossible. At the utter verge of the gulf, however, the animal put on a sort of vacuum brake of which a mule alone has the secret, and when its head was absolutely hanging over it, we stopped. That day also this same trusty creature fell with me in the midst

of a flooded river, and in the evening I ended an entertaining journey by being slung across another roaring torrent some eighty yards wide in a loop of string attached to a very rotten rope, along which I was pulled in jerks. But of the varied experiences of that expedition I must not stop to tell. I lived through it, so let its memory be blessed.

Still I do not wish to asperse the mule, as upon a long journey a really good ambler is worth untold wealth. Such as a general rule, however, do not fall to the lot of the visitor, who has to take what he can get at the time; as frequently as not, pack animals, which have never carried a man before.

The mule is very cunning. I saw one in Cyprus, a noted creature which always looks to see whether the man who purposes to ride him is or is not wearing spurs. If he is he does not mount that day, or at least until the spurs are off. The next thing this mule looks at is the whip. Should it be a goad such as the natives use, he resigns himself to circumstances; if a mere useless walking-stick, well, he will not travel fast that trip.

One more thing about the mule; it is hopeless to try to ride him in the company of horses. The horse has his paces of walk, trot, and canter, and the mule his, an amble, so that however close together their riders may find themselves at the end of a day's journey, during the course of it they will be widely separated.

Much of the land through which we rode to Colossi was under crops of wheat and barley, the latter now coming into ear. The cultivation struck me as generally very poor, but what can one expect in a country where they merely scratch the surface of the soil, and so far as I could see never use manure? So shallow is their ploughing that in most cases squills and other bulbous roots are not dislodged by it, but grow on among the corn, where, dotted about, also stand many carob-trees, of which the fruit, a bean, is the basis of Thorley's and

TOWER OF COLOSSI

other foods for cattle. On the patches of uncultivated land a great many very beautiful anemones, the harbingers of spring, were in flower, also large roots of asphodel with its stiff sword-shaped leaves. This was the flower of which the Greek poets were so fond of singing. Their wars and labours o'er, the heroes are to repose

> " . . . in the shadowy field
> Of asphodel."

In point of fact it is in my opinion an unpleasing plant, the flowers, which spring from a tall stem, being small individually and neutral-tinted. Also they have this peculiarity; if cut and set in a room, they cause the place to smell as though many cats had slept there.

A ride of about an hour brought us to Colossi. That the tower in its present shape was built or repaired in the Lusignan time is evident from the coats of arms—very beautifully cut—of the orders of the Knights Templars and St. John which still appear upon the east face of the fortress. On one of these shields, that below the other three, all the four quarters carry a fleur-de-lys and nothing else. Another, the centre of the three in the upper line, immediately beneath the crown which seems to take the place of a crest, has four crosses in the dexter quartering, and a rampant lion on the rest. I say of the three coats, but as a matter of fact there are only two, the third, which has been removed, being represented by an ugly gaping hole. It seems that some cantankerous old person who still lives in the village had a lawsuit, which he lost, as to the ownership of this tower of Colossi. In order to reassert his rights, however, he wrenched out one of the coats-of-arms and took it off to his house, where it remains. In the interest of the archæology of the island the Government ought to insist upon its being restored, or if necessary to replace it by force.[1]

[1] Since the above passage was written, I hear that on the death of the individual spoken of, a search was made for the missing shield. It has vanished quite away—probably by secret burial!—H. R. H.

The tower itself, according to my rough pacings, is a square of about fifty-seven feet internal measurement, and from sixty to seventy feet in height. It is a very massive building still in fair order, although I suppose that it has not been repaired for centuries. Now—so low are the mighty fallen—it serves only as a grain and chaff store for the surrounding farm. Its bottom storey, which is strongly vaulted, evidently was used for soldiers' quarters and dungeons. Above is a fine chamber now partitioned off, which occupies the whole square of the castle and is adorned with a noble, vaulted fireplace stamped on either side with a fleur-de-lys. The tradition is that Richard Cœur-de-Lion spent his honeymoon with Berengaria in this chamber after rescuing her *vi et armis* from the Emperor Isaac, whom he defeated in the plains below. There is another story which I have heard but am unable to trace, namely that Richard in his hurry to attack the forces of the Emperor outrode his companions, and reaching this tower of Colossi, shook his lance and galloped about it alone calling to Isaac, who was a poor creature and had not the slightest wish to accept the invitation, to come out and fight him.

A narrow winding stair of the usual Norman type, whereof the ends of the steps themselves form the central supporting column, leads to the cement roof, which is flat, as is common in Cyprus. Hence the view is very beautiful, for beneath lies a wide stretch of country, now looking its best in the green garment of springing crops, while to the right the eye is caught by a great salt lake, once a source of considerable revenue to the island. This it might be again indeed, were it not that with the peculiar ineptitude and want of foresight which distinguished the agreement concluded by the Government of this country as to the occupation of Cyprus, we have promised the Turks not to work it in competition with other salt lakes of their own on the mainland. Loveliest of all perhaps is the blue background of the measureless,

smiling sea, dotted here and there with white-sailed ships.

Projecting from this roof upon one side is a curious grating of massive stone, of which presently I guessed the use. Immediately beneath hung the portcullis of the castle, whereof the wooden rollers or pulleys are still to be seen. Doubtless this grating was designed as a place of vantage whence the defenders could let fall stones or boiling oil and water upon the heads of those who attacked the drawbridge.

Some rich man ought to buy Colossi, sweep away the filthy farm-buildings about it, and restore the tower to its original grandeur. With suitable additions it would make a delightful country-house.

Night was falling before we came home to Limasol. The last glow of sunset still lingered on the white walls and red roofs of the scattered houses, while above them here a feathery palm, and there a graceful minaret stood out against the pale green sky in which the moon shone coldly.

CHAPTER VII

A CYPRIOTE WEDDING

On Sunday we attended church in the Sergeants' room, a congregation perhaps of twelve or fifteen people. Limasol has a chapel belonging to it which was once used for the troops, but as it seems that the War Office, or the Treasury, I am not sure which, lay claim to the altar rails and benches, no service is now held there. In Cyprus as elsewhere there is such a thing as Red Tape.

After luncheon I accompanied Mr. Michell, the Commissioner, to a grand Greek wedding to which he had kindly procured me an invitation. On arriving at the house we were conducted upstairs to a large central room, out of which opened other rooms. In one of these stood the bride dressed in white, a pretty, dark-eyed girl, to whom we were introduced. By her, arrayed in evening clothes, was the bridegroom, a Greek, who is registrar of the local court, and about them their respective parents and other relatives. In the main apartment were assembled a mixed crowd of friends, guests, and onlookers. Near its centre stood a marble-topped table arranged as an altar with two tall candlesticks wreathed in orange blossoms, a cup of sacramental wine, two cakes of sacramental bread, a silver basket holding two wreaths of orange blossom with long satin streamers attached, and a copy of the Gospels beautifully bound in embossed silver.

Presently a procession of six priests entered the room, attired all of them in magnificent robes of red and blue

worked with silk, gold and silver. They wore tall Eastern-looking hats very much like those affected by Parsees and had their hair arranged in a pigtail, which in some instances hung down their backs and in others was tucked up beneath the head-dress. All of them were heavily bearded.

Most of these priests were striking in appearance, with faces by no means devoid of spirituality. Indeed, studying them, it struck me that some of the Apostles might have looked like those men. The modern idea of the disciples of our Lord is derived in the main, perhaps, from pictures by artists of the Renaissance school, of large-made, brawny individuals, with wild hair and very strongly-marked countenances, quite different from the type that is prevalent in the East to-day. It is probable that these fanciful portraits have no trustworthy basis to recommend them to our conviction; that in appearance indeed the chosen twelve did not differ very widely from such men of the more intellectual stamp, as are now to be seen in Cyprus and Syria. But this is a question that could be argued indefinitely, one moreover not susceptible of proof.

Tradition, however, curiously unvarying in this instance, has assigned to the Saviour a certain type of face which, with differences and modifications, is not unlike that of at least two of the priests whom I saw at this ceremony. They looked good men, intellectual men, men who were capable of thought and work—very different, for example, in their general aspect and atmosphere to the vast majority of those priests whom the traveller sees in such a place as Florence. Still the reputation of these Greek clergy is not uncommonly malodorous. Critics say hard things of them, as the laity do of the priests in South America. Probably all these things are not true. In every land the clergyman is an individual set upon a pedestal at whom it is easy to throw dirt, and when the dirt strikes it sticks, so that all the world may

see and pass by on the other side. Doubtless, however, here as elsewhere there are backsliders, and of these, after the fashion of the world, we hear more than of the good and quiet men who do their duty according to their lights and opportunities and are still.

When all the preliminaries were finished the bride and bridegroom took their places before the table-altar which I have described, and crossed themselves ceremoniously. Then the service began. It was long and impressive, consisting chiefly of prayers and passages of Scripture read or chanted by the different priests in turn, several men standing round them who were, I suppose, professionals, intoning the responses with considerable effect. At an appointed place in the ceremony a priest produced two rings with which he touched the foreheads and breasts of the contracting parties, making with them the sign of the cross. One of these rings was then put on by the bridegroom and the other, oddly enough over her glove, by the bride.

At later periods of the service the silver-covered book of the Gospels was given to the pair to kiss, and cotton-seed, emblematic apparently of fertility, like our rice, was thrown on to them from an adjoining room. Also, and this was the strangest part of the ceremony, the two wreaths that I have described were taken from the silver basket and set respectively upon the brow of the bridegroom and the veil, already wreath-crowned, of the bride, where it did not sit at all well, giving her, in fact, a somewhat bacchanalian air. The bridegroom also looked peculiar with this floral decoration perched above his spectacles, especially as its pendent satin tails were seized by six or eight of his groomsmen of all ages who, with their help—the bride being similarly escorted by her ladies—proceeded to drive the pair of them thrice round the altar-table. Indeed this part of the service, however deeply symbolical it may be, undoubtedly had a comic side. Another rite was that of the kissing by the priests of the

wreaths when set upon the heads of the contracting parties, and the kissing of the hands of the priests by the bride and bridegroom.

After these wreaths had been removed the newly-married pair partook of the Communion in both kinds, biting thrice at the consecrated cake of bread that was held to their mouths, and drinking (I think) three sips of the wine. This done the elements were removed. The ceremony ended with a solemn blessing delivered by the head priest and the embracing of the bride and bridegroom by their respective relations. At this point the bride wept after the fashion of ladies in her situation throughout the world. Indeed she was moved to tears at several stages of the service.

After it was over, in company with other guests we offered our congratulations to the pair, drank wine to their healths and partook of sweetmeats. Also we inspected the nuptial chamber, which was adorned with satin pillows of a bright and beautiful blue. I am informed, but of this matter I have no personal knowledge, that the friends of the bride stuff her mattress with great ceremony, inserting in it pieces of money and other articles of value. So we bade them good-bye, and now as then I wish to both of them every excellent fortune in life.

It struck me as curious that with so many churches close at hand this rite should have been celebrated in a room. The last solemn ceremony connected with the fortunes of man at which I assisted in a private house was in Iceland amid the winter seas, far away from this southern home of Venus. At a stead where I was staying dwelt an aged man, a relative of the owners of the farm whom they were supporting out of charity. There is no poor-law in Iceland, so relations are legally obliged to take its place, a state of affairs that must lead to curious complications.

While I was in the house—a lonely place far from

any other stead—the old man died. They made him a coffin and laid him in it, and I was invited to be present at the ceremony which followed. It consisted chiefly of a long and most beautiful chant which, as I was told, had come down for many generations but has never been printed. All present in the room, perhaps a dozen people, intoned this solemn chant, standing round the coffin where the dead man lay with the light shining upon his snowy beard and calm majestic face. Then they prayed and the coffin was closed. Afterwards I saw a little party of rough, earnest men carry it over the rocks down to the head of the fiord where a boat was waiting. There they laid it and rowed away till they were swallowed up in the awesome loneliness of mountain, sky, and sea which seemed to sleep beneath the blue and ghostly shadows of the Iceland summer night.

To return to Cyprus; later in the afternoon of the wedding we went for a ride to the military camp, about three miles from Limasol. Once there was a regiment quartered here, but the garrison is now, I think, reduced to a single company. It would be difficult to find a healthier or more convenient site whereat to station soldiers, the place being high and the water excellent. Perhaps those empty huts will be filled again some day.

On our way back we passed through a grove of the most gigantic olive-trees that I ever saw. Those in the Garden of Gethsemane seem small compared to them. Having a rule in my pocket I dismounted and took the measure of one of these. It proved to be approximately fifty feet in circumference by sixteen in diameter at the ground, but of course was almost hollow. How old must that tree be? Taking into consideration the hard wood and slow-growing habit of the olive, I imagine that in the time of the Romans, and very possibly in those of the Ptolemies, it was already bearing fruit. Perhaps a Mycenian, or one of Alexander's legionaries, planted it, who can say? Probably, too, it will last for another three

or four hundred years before, in the grip of slow decay, that end overtakes it which awaits everything earthly, not excepting the old earth herself.

One morning Mr. Mavrogordato, the Commandant of Police for the Limasol district, to whose kindness I owe many of the photographs of scenes in Cyprus which are reproduced in these pages, took us to see the ancient fortress of the town, now used as its prison. The road to this castle passes through a disused Turkish graveyard where Mr. Mavrogordato has had the happy thought to plant trees which, in that kindly air and soil, are now growing up into a welcome patch of greenery and shade. This castle is a massive building in stone belonging apparently to the Venetian period, that is, above ground, for the chapel and vaults below are Gothic. The interior is kept most scrupulously clean and whitewashed. Round the central well run galleries in two storeys, which galleries are divided into cells whereof the iron gates are secured with large and resplendent brass padlocks. I do not think that I ever saw padlocks which shone so bright. From side to side of the second storey, stretched across the deep well beneath, is an ugly-looking black balk of timber, and screwed into it are two bolts and eyes of singularly uncompromising and suggestive appearance. This is the gallows beam, so placed and arranged that the prisoners in the cells have the advantage of a daily contemplation of the last bridge of evil footsteps. An execution from that beam, and there have been several, I believe, must create quite an excitement among the wrong-doers of Limasol.

It is curious, by the way, although I daresay that the thought may never have occurred to the reader, how singularly ugly are the instruments of judicial death and torment. Take a rack, for instance. Even those who had not the slightest idea of its sinister uses would exclaim—"What a hideous thing!" I have seen a certain rack in one of the old cities of North Holland, Alkmaar

or Hoorn, I think, whereof the mere appearance is distressing; yet it has none of the superfluous complications of more highly finished instruments of its class. Indeed it is of a stern simplicity; a board, two rollers, two windlass handles and trestle legs bolted together, very stout and broad-footed. Yet the man who made it contrived to fill its every line with a horrible suggestiveness. Thus the plank, like the bottom of some old coffins, is cut in and out to the shape of the human body, and each other part has some separate quaintly-dreadful look. Again how ugly are a beheading-block and its companion axe. Even a pair of stocks is not ornamental, and I am told that the new electrical machine of death now used in the United States is a thing hideous to behold.

The subject is disagreeable, so I will not treat of it further, except to say generally that there seems to be some mysterious *rapport* between violent sufferings and deaths and the instruments which man has found most convenient to produce them. Here we have another exemplification of the old proverb—like to like—the cruel things to the cruel deeds. But this matter is too large to enter upon in the pages of a book of travel.

On the occasion of my visit, amongst other convicts there were in the Limasol prison, contemplating the gallows-beam aforesaid, four men who were accused of the murder of a fellow-villager suspected of having poisoned their cattle. Murder is a crime of not uncommon occurrence in Cyprus, where many of the inhabitants are very poor and desirous of earning money, even in reward of the destruction of a neighbour with whom they have no quarrel. It has been proved in the course of investigation of some of these cases that the fee paid was really absurdly small, so low as ten shillings indeed, or, as one of the judges informed me, in the instance of a particularly abominable slaughter, four shillings and no more. Some of the victims suffer on account of quarrels about women, as in Mexico, where in a single village street on a Sunday

morning, after the orgies of a Saturday night, I have seen as many as three dead, or at least two dead and one dying. More frequently, however, in Cyprus the victim is a downright bad character of whom a community are determined to be rid, so that in fact the murder, as in the present example, partakes of the nature of lynch-law.

After the commission of the crime its perpetrators, if suspected, hide themselves in the mountains, where they must be hunted down like wild beasts. One party of these outlaws defied arrest for quite a number of months, during which time they took several shots at the pursuing Mr. Mavrogordato. Ultimately, however, they were themselves shot, or caught and hanged.

The view from the top of the castle was perhaps even more beautiful than that of Colossi. In front, the boundless sea whereon poor Berengaria of Navarre, rolling in the roads of Limasol, suffered such dire perplexities and exercised so wise a caution. Behind, the slopes of the grey mountains with Trooidos towering above them, white-capped just now with snow. To the right the salt lake, and immediately beneath, the town dotted here and there with palms.

Just at the foot of the fortress is the Turkish quarter, for the most part nothing better than a collection of mud hovels. The population of Cyprus, it may be explained, is divided into Turks and pure Cypriotes. These Turks, I suppose, are the descendants of those members of the invading Ottoman army under Mustafa which conquered Cyprus three centuries ago, who elected to remain in the island as settlers. The proportion is roughly—Turks one-third of the population, Cypriotes two-thirds. The Turks, who generally live in villages by themselves, are going down the hill rapidly, both in numbers and wealth, being poor, lazy, fatalistic, and quite unfitted to cope with their cleverer Christian compatriots. In many instances, however, they are respected and respectable members of the community, brave in person and upright in con-

duct. Few of them can afford more than one wife and as a rule their families seem small.

The richer and more successful class of Cypriotes have a habit of adopting Greek names, but in fact very few of them are Greeks except for so much of the Mycenian blood as may remain in their veins. Still some of them intrigue against the British Government and affect a patriotic desire for union with Greece, that even the disillusionment of the Turkish war has not quenched. These aspirations, which, in some instances at any rate, are said to be not uninfluenced by the hope of rewards and appointments when the blessed change occurs, are scarcely likely to be realised. If Cyprus is ever handed over to any one by Great Britain, it must be to its nominal suzerain the Sultan, to whom the reversion belongs. But surely, after the stories of the recent massacres of Christians, and other events connected with Turkish rule, British public opinion, exercised as it is profoundly by the existing if half-avowed alliance between this country and the evil system which the Sultan represents, could never allow of such a step. It would be monstrous to give back Christians into his keeping, and a crime to plunge Cyprus once more into the helpless, hopeless ruin, out of which under our just if sorely hampered government it is being slowly lifted.

After inspecting Mr. Mavrogordato's stud—if that be the correct expression—of homing pigeons which with characteristic energy—not too common a quality in Cyprus—he is breeding up from imported birds, we descended from the roof to the foundations of the castle. Here we visited a large vaulted place whereof the windows have been built up in some past age. Now, we see by the light of our lanterns, it is a rubbish room, and before that, as I imagine from several indications, under the Turkish régime, probably it served as a magazine for the storage of powder. In the old days, however, this place was a chapel and here it is said, upon what exact

authority I know not, that Richard Cœur-de-Lion was married to Berengaria of Navarre. The only account of these nuptials that I can lay my hand on at this moment is from a contemporary chronicle of Geoffrey de Vinsauf or Vinosalvo. He, it will be observed, although writing of Limasol, or Limouzin as he calls the town, does not mention the church in which the wedding was solemnised. If there was more than one available, which is to be doubted, it seems most probable that the chapel of the fortress would have been chosen. This is what Geoffrey says:—

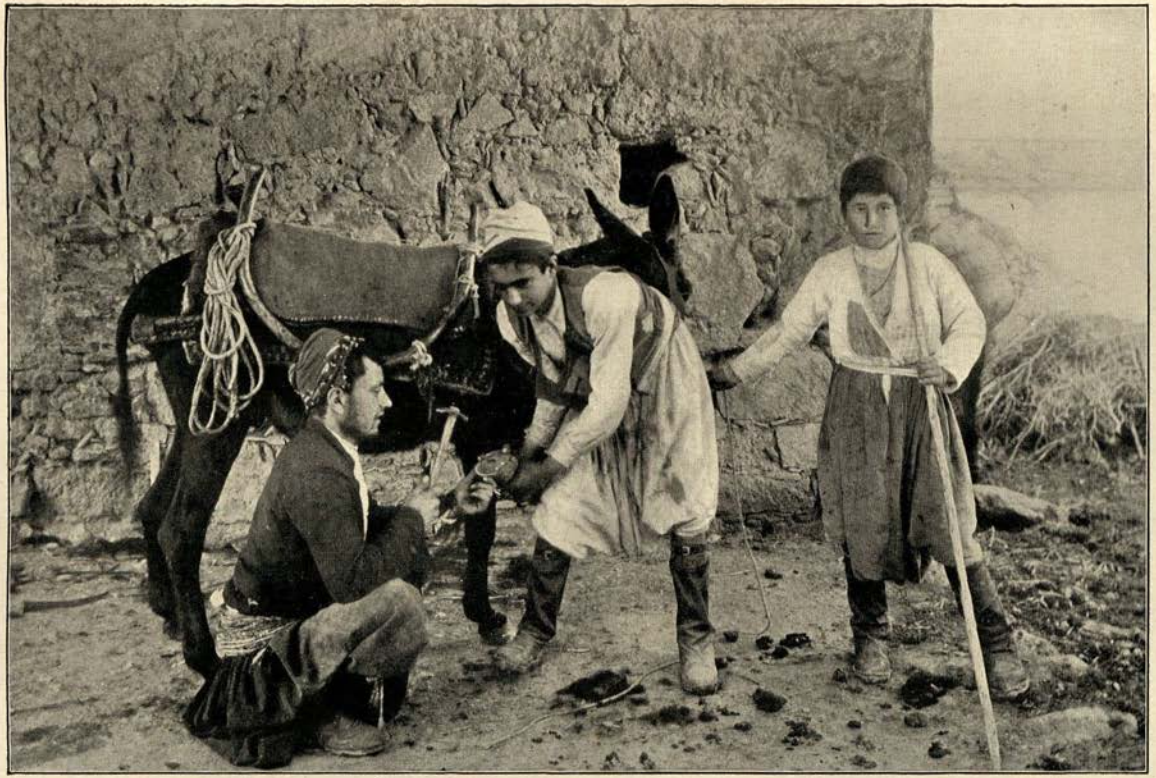
"On the morrow, namely on the Sunday, which was the festival of St. Pancras, the marriage of King Richard and Berengaria, the daughter of the King of Navarre, was solemnised at Limouzin: she was a damsel of the greatest prudence and most accomplished manners, and there she was crowned queen. There were present at the ceremony the Archbishop and the Bishop of Evreux and the Bishop of Banera, and many other chiefs and nobles. The king was glorious on this happy occasion, and cheerful to all, and showed himself joyous and affable."

How strange are the vicissitudes of walls! The fortunes of the short-lived generations that inhabit them are not so variable, for these stones last longer and see more. What a contrast between this place in its present state, lumber-strewn and lit only by a few dim lamps, to that which it must have presented in the year 1191 when the warrior king, Richard, one of the most remarkable and attractive characters who occupy the long page of our English history, took to himself a wife within their circuit. It is not difficult, even to the dullest and least imaginative of the few travellers who stray to this unvisited place, to reconstruct something of that pageant of the mighty dead. The splendid figure of the king himself, clad in his shirt of mail and broidered tabard gay with the royal arms of England. The fair bride glittering in her beautiful silken garments and rich adorn-

ment of gems. The archbishop and bishops in their mitred pomp. The great lords and attendant knights arrayed in their various armour. The crowd of squires and servitors pressing about the door. The altar decked with flowers, the song of such choristers as could be found among the crews of the galleys—all the gathered splendour, rude but impressive, of perhaps the most picturesque age that is known to history.

Then these great folk, thousands of miles away from their northern home, who had laboriously travelled hither exposed to the most fearful dangers by land and sea, enduring such privations as few common soldiers would now consent to bear, not to possess themselves of gold-mines or for any other thinly-veiled purposes of gain, but in the fulfilment of a great idea! And that idea—what was it? To carry out a trust which they conceived, wisely or in foolishness, to be laid upon them—the rescue of the holy places from the befouling hand of the infidel. Well, they are gone and their cause is lost, and the Moslem, supported by the realm which once they ruled, still squats in the Holy Land. Such is the irony of fate, but for my part I think that these old crusaders, and especially our hot-headed Richard of England, cruel though he was at times, as we shall see at Acre, are worthy of more sympathy than a practical age seems inclined to waste upon them. Peace to their warlike, superstitious souls!

On leaving the castle we visited an inn, in the yard of which stood scores of mules. It was an odoriferous but interesting place. Under a shed at one side of it sat about a dozen smiths at work, men who hire their stands at a yearly or monthly rent. Fixed into the ground before each of them—it must be remembered that these people sit at their work, which is all done on the cold iron without the help of fire—was a tiny anvil. On these anvils the craftsmen were employed in fashioning the great horseshoe nails of the country, or in cutting out



CYPRIAN FARRIERS

and hammering thin, flat, iron plates which are used in the East for the shoeing of mules and donkeys. These discs that are made with only one small hole in the centre, must in many ways be prejudicial to the comfort and health of the beast, or so we should think, since they cause its frog to grow foul and rot away. The teachings of practical experience, however—for which after some study of such things I have great respect—seem to prove this kind of shoe to be best suited for use upon the stony tracks of the country. These plates are secured to the animal's hoof by six of the huge-headed nails that I have mentioned, and if properly fixed will last for several months without renewal.

The instrument used to trim the hoof before the shoe is fastened, is a marvellous tool, almost of the size of a sickle with a flat knife attached to it as large as a child's spade. Probably all these implements, especially if connected in any way with agriculture, such as the wooden hook with an iron point which they call a plough, are essentially the same as those that were familiar to the Phœnicians and the Mycenian Greeks. In the Holy Land, at any rate, as we shall see later, they have not changed since the time of our Lord.

That this was so as regards the shoeing of horses in or about the year 1430 is proved by the following passage which I take from the travels of Bertrandon de la Brocquière of Guienne, who made a pilgrimage to Palestine in 1432. He says:—

"I bought a small horse that turned out very well. Before my departure I had him shod in Damascus; and thence as far as Bursa, which is fifty days' journey, so well do they shoe their horses that I had nothing to do with his feet, excepting one of the fore ones, which was pricked by a nail, and made him lame for three weeks. The shoes are light, thin, lengthened towards the heel, and thinner there than at the toe. They are not turned up, and have but four nail-holes, two on each side. The nails are square, with a thick and heavy head. When a shoe is

wanted, and it is necessary to work it to make it fit the hoof, it is done cold, without ever putting it in the fire, which can readily be done because it is so thin. To pare the hoof they use a pruning knife, similar to what vine-dressers trim their vines with, both on this as well as on the other side of the sea."

This description might well apply to the shoeing of animals in Cyprus and Syria to-day.

From the inn we walked to the municipal market, where we found many strange vegetables for sale, including radishes large as a full-grown carrot. Nothing smaller in the radish line seems to flourish here, and I am informed that for some occult reason it is impossible to intercept them in an intermediate stage of their development. Perhaps, like mushrooms, they spring up in a single night. I am grateful to these vegetables, however, for the sight of them made clear to me the meaning of a passage by which I have long been worried. I remember reading, I forget where, in the accounts of one of the pyramid-building Pharaohs—Chufu, I believe —that he supplied tens of thousands of bunches of radishes daily to the hundred thousand labourers who were engaged upon the works.

What puzzled me was to know how Chufu provided so enormous and perennial a supply of this vegetable. The radishes of Cyprus solve the problem. One of these would be quite enough for any two pyramid-builders. I tasted them and they struck me as stringy and flavourless. Another old friend in a new form was celery tied in bunches, but such celery! Not an inch of crisp white root about it, nothing but green and leathery head. It appears in this form because it has been grown upon the top of the ground like a cabbage. Many people have tried to persuade the intelligent Cypriote to earth up his celery, but hitherto without result. "My father grew the herb thus," he answers, "and I grow it as my father did." Doubtless the Phœnicians, ignorant of the

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arsenic it is said to contain, liked their celery green, or perhaps it was the Persians.

Meat and game, the former marked—so advanced is Limasol—with the municipal stamp for *octroi* purposes, are also sold here. There on one stall next to a great pile of oranges, lie half-a-dozen woodcock, brown and beautiful, and by them a brace of French partridges now just going out of season, while further on is a fine hare. On the next, hanging to hooks, are poor little lambs with their throats cut, scarcely bigger than the hare, any of them; and full-grown sheep, some not so large as my fat black-faced lambs at Easter. A little further on we came to a cobbler's shop, where we inspected the native boots. These are made of goatskin and high to the knee, with soles composed of many thicknesses of leather that must measure an inch through. Cumbersome as they seem, the experience of centuries proves these boots to be the best wear possible for the inhabitants of the mountainous districts of this stony land. On the very day of which I write I saw a Cypriote arrayed in them running over the tumbled ruins of an ancient city and through the mud patches whereby it was intersected, with no more care or inconvenience than we should experience on a tennis lawn.

CHAPTER VIII

AMATHUS

Now I have to tell of Amathus, the place we passed on our journey down the coast, to-day a stone-strewn hill covered with springing corn. Even in the far past Amathus was so ancient that no one knew with certainty of its beginnings. It is said to have been founded by the Phœnicians; at any rate in it flourished a temple to the god Melkarth, and with it a famous shrine erected in honour of Venus. The mythical hero, Theseus, according to one account, is reported to have landed here with Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, who died in childbirth in the city, although the story more generally accepted says that he abandoned her on the island of Naxos. Whatever truth there may be in all these legends—and probably it is but little—this is certain, that in its day Amathus was a great town inhabited by a prosperous and powerful people. It lies about five or six miles from Limasol and is approached by a road which runs along the sea, whence it is separated by a stretch of curious black sand which blows a good deal in high winds. On the way Mr. Mavrogordato pointed out to me an ingenious method whereby he is attempting to turn that barren belt into profitable soil. He seems to have discovered that this sand, wherein one might imagine nothing would grow, is suitable to the needs of the black wattle. At any rate the trees of that species which he planted there, although scarcely more than a year old, are now large and flourishing shrubs.

As we drew near to Amathus I perceived curious

holes by the roadside, covered in for the most part with rough slabs of stone. Once these holes were tombs, rifled long ago. Then we came to the site of the town stretching down to the sea-beach, where stand the remnants of a castle which we saw from the steamer. Now it is nothing but a hillside literally sown with stones that, no doubt, once formed the foundations of the dwellings of Amathus. I say the foundations, for I believe that the houses of these ancient cities, as in the villages of Cyprus to-day, were for the most part built of green brick, or what here in Norfolk we should call clay-lump, which in the course of centuries of sun and rain has melted away into the soil. The temple, public buildings, and palaces must have been magnificent, and as I shall show presently, wonderful care was lavished upon the tombs; but the habitations of the great mass of the citizens were in all likelihood humble and temporary structures, or so I think. It is the same in Egypt, where the old inhabitants grudged neither wealth nor labour in the preparation of graves, their everlasting abode, but were content to fashion their earthly lodgings of the Nile mud that lay at hand.

Amathus must have been very strong, indeed it would be difficult to find a site better suited to defence. It is surrounded by steep natural ravines which served the purpose of moats, and surmounted by a towering rock with precipitous sides, along whose slopes the city lay. Upon this rock, says tradition, stood an impregnable citadel; indeed the site is still called "The Old Castle" by the peasants of the neighbouring village of Agia Tychenos. Now all these countless stones furnish their humble tillers with a seed-bed for wheat and barley. The inexperienced might imagine that no place could be more unsuitable for the growing of crops, but in fact this is not so, seeing that in the severe Cyprian droughts stones have the property of retaining moisture to nurture the roots which otherwise would perish.

On arriving at the foot of the hill we rode round it to visit the tombs which lie behind and beyond, taking with us a supply of candles and several peasants as guides. These sepulchres were, I believe, discovered and plundered more than twenty years ago by General Cesnola, the consul, whose splendid collection of antiquities is to be seen in America. The first we reached lay at the bottom of a deep pit now rapidly refilling with silt washed into it by the winter wet. In the surrounding rubbish we could still see traces of its violation, for here lay many fragments of ancient amphoræ and of a shattered marble sarcophagus. After the rains that had fallen recently the path through the hole leading into the tomb was nothing but a pool of liquid mud through which, to win an entrance, the explorer must crawl upon his stomach, as the soil rises to within about eighteen inches of the top blocks of its square doorway. The task seemed dirty and in every way unpleasing, but I for one did not travel to Cyprus to be baffled by common, harmless mud. So I took off my coat, which in the scant state of our wardrobe I did not care to spoil, and went at it, on my hands and toes, that the rest of me might avoid the slush as much as possible.

It was a slimy and a darksome wriggle, but quite safe, in this respect differing somewhat from a journey of a like nature which I made a good many years ago. That was near Assouan in Egypt, where at the time certain new tombs had just been discovered which I was anxious to explore. These tombs were hollowed in the rock at the top of a steep slope of sand, which choked their doorways. Seeing that, as at Amathus, there was just sufficient space left beneath the head of the doorway of one of them for a man of moderate size to creep through, I made the attempt alone. Writhing forward, serpent-wise, through the sand, presently I found myself in the very grimmest place that I have ever visited. It was a cave of the size of a large room, and when my eyes

grew accustomed to the faint light which crept through the hole, I saw that it was literally full of dead, so full that their bodies must once have risen almost to the roof. Moreover these dead had not been embalmed, for round me lay their clean bones by hundreds and their skulls by scores. Yet once this sepulchre was at the service of older and more distinguished occupants, as under the skeletons I found a broken mummy-case of good workmanship, and in it the body of a woman whose wrappings had decayed. She died young, since at the time of her decease she was just cutting her wisdom teeth.

As I wondered over these jumbled relics of the departed, I remembered having read that about the time of Christ, Assouan was smitten with a fearful plague which slew its inhabitants by thousands. Doubtless, I thought, here are the inhabitants, or some of them, whose bodies in such a time of pestilence it would have been impossible to embalm. So they must have brought and piled them one on another in the caves that had served as sepulchres of the richer notables among their forefathers, till all were full. I remembered also that plague germs are said to be singularly long-lived and that these might be getting hungry. With that thought I brought my examination of this interesting place to a sudden end.

Just as I was beginning my outward crawl, foolishly enough I shouted loudly to my companion whom I had left at the entrance of another sepulchre, thinking that he might help to pull me through the hole. Almost immediately afterwards I felt something weighty begin to trickle on to my back with an ever-increasing stream and in a flash understood that the reverberations of my voice had loosened the over-hanging stones already shaken and shattered by earthquakes, and that the sand was pouring down upon me from between them. Heavens! how frightened I was. Luckily one does not argue under

such circumstances where, indeed, he who hesitates is lost. If I had stopped to think whether it would be best to go back or to go forward, to go quick or go slow, it is very probable that long since I should have added an alien cranium to those of that various pile. Instead I crawled forward more swiftly than ever I crawled before, notwithstanding the increasing weight upon my back, for the sand fell faster and faster, with the result that as no stone followed it to crush me, presently, somewhat exhausted, I was sitting fanning myself with a grateful heart in the dazzling sun without.

To return to Amathus and a still older tomb: this doorway beneath which we passed was also square and surmounted by four separate mouldings. Once through it, we lighted our candles to find ourselves standing in a kind of chapel, where I suppose the relatives of the dead assembled at funerals or to make offerings on the anniversaries of death. Out of this chapel opened four tombs, each of them large enough to contain several bodies. They are empty now, but their beautiful workmanship is left for us to admire. Thousands of years ago—though to look at them one might think it yesterday—the hard limestone blocks of which they are built were laid with a trueness and finish that is quite exquisite. Clearly no scamped work was allowed in old Phœnician tombs. In these graves and others close at hand, General Cesnola found many antiques of value. Indeed one of our guides, who was employed to dig for him, assisted at their ransack.

Some readers may remember a violent controversy which arose among the learned over the allegation that Cesnola unearthed the most of his more valuable antiquities in a single treasury at Curium. The said antiquities, however, being, so the critics declared, of many different styles and periods, it was found difficult to understand how they could have been discovered in one place, unless indeed Curium boasted a prehistoric British Museum with a gold-

room attached. Here I may say that a few days later I visited Curium in the company of official gentlemen, who informed me that they were present when excavations were made with the object of investigating these statements. The statements, they said, were not proved.

Bearing this dispute in mind, I asked the Cypriote guide whether General Cesnola found his most important objects heaped in one place at Curium. He answered that antiquities were found here and there; that often Cesnola himself was not present when they were found, but that as they were dug up from the tombs they were collected by the workmen and taken care of, to be given over to him whenever he might come. I quote this bit of evidence for what it is worth, as in future generations, when all these burial-places have been thoroughly ransacked, the matter may become of interest because of the side-light which it throws upon ancient history.

Much of our knowledge of the remote past is derived from tombs, and yet to my mind our pleasing habit of violating the dead, whether for purposes of gain or in order to satisfy our thirst for information, is not altogether easy to justify. It is a very ancient habit. Because of it the mummies of Rameses, the Pharaoh of the Oppression, of the wondrous-faced Seti, his father, of the monarchs of, I think, the Her-hor dynasty, and a host of others, about the period of the Persian invasion were moved from their immemorial resting-places to the hiding hole of Deir-el-Bahari. Long before this indeed the rulers of Egypt, knowing the danger, were in the habit, at intervals of several hundred years, of despatching royal commissioners to inspect the bodies of the great departed and ascertain that they slept safe and undisturbed. I myself have seen writings upon the outer wrappings of the deceased which notified that such and such a commission inspected the corpse of such and such a divine king—he who lay within the wrappings—now "sleeping in Osiris," and found his coffins and corpse intact.

In this particular instance the efforts of the ancient Egyptians to preserve the earthly remnants of those who ruled over them thousands of years before, did but postpone the evil day. Tens of generations went by, and in a fashion interesting enough but too long to describe here, the hiding-place of Deir-el-Bahari was discovered. Modern savants hurried to the place—one of them told me not long afterwards that he nearly fainted with joy when by the light of candles held above his head, he discovered the richness of that hoard. Up the deep and narrow well were dragged the corpses of kings and queens as great in their own time as Victoria or Napoleon. As they were borne to the steamer the fellaheen women, inspired by some spirit of hereditary veneration, ran along the banks of Nile weeping, tearing their hair and throwing dust upon their heads because the ancient lords of their land were being taken away and none knew where they would lay them. Now rent from their wrappings, their half-naked bodies lie in the glass cases of a museum to be stared at by every tourist. The face before whose frown whole nations trembled and mayhap Joseph or Moses bowed the knee, is an object for the common jest of the vulgar, and so will remain until within a few decades or centuries it is burnt in a conflagration, or torn to pieces by a drunken rabble, or perchance—happier destiny—crumbled into dust as must happen soon or late, to be thrown out upon the dung-heap for hens to scratch at.

Is it right? I ask who have been a sinner. Myself in the neighbourhood of Abydos, to take one example out of several whereof the recollections to-day fill me with some remorse, I found the mummy of a child. She was a little girl, who, poor dear, had lived and died in the first centuries of the Christian era, of Greek parentage, probably, for her skin was exceeding white. She lay wrapped in coloured bandages, not unlike some of the cottons which are manufactured to-day, and on a piece of mummy cloth which covered them, her

parents had drawn a cross in red pigment and scrawled beneath it in Greek characters the word "Christos."

I hold that holy rag in my hand as I write and it shames me that I do so, but if I had not taken it the Arabs who were with me and who showed me the hiding-place, would have sold it to the next traveller. I remember that on the same journey we unwrapped the head of a mummy purchased from some tomb-breaker for a few piastres. Oh! what a face appeared! That man who had lived four thousand years ago might have been a king, or a high-priest, so majestic were his withered features. Certainly his blood must have been noble and his place high. Yet his end was that a doctor sawed his skull open to see how it was embalmed. May he forgive me for the part I took in that business, who then was younger and more thoughtless.

At the time perhaps I did not understand quite as well as I do now—I mention this in my excuse—how sincere and solemn was the belief which among the old Egyptians led to this practice of embalming. Of all people who have ever lived, not even excluding those of our Christian faith, they held most firmly to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Therefore they preserved that body against the hour of its awakening, and the idea of its disturbance, or destruction, was to them horrible. It was a futile faith, as they themselves recognised, since knowing that no efforts of their own could guard against future events—such as the arrival of the Nile tourist—they multiplied images and pictures of the deceased, hoping that some one of them might survive for the Ka or Double to haunt, and the Khu, or Spirit, to reanimate at the appointed season. Piteous and idle plan, since dust must to dust, be it soon or late. Still their faith may fulfil itself in other ways, and we may venture to believe that at the last the Spirit they were so sure of will not be left without its tabernacle.

Yet is our offence as great, although with a strange

and gross materialism we suppose, when we consider the matter at all, that the fact of these folk having died so long ago makes them fair prey for our greed or curiosity. But what is time to the dead? Ten million ages and a nap after dinner, unconsciousness can know no difference—to consciousness refound they must be one. On awakening in each case the recollections would be as vivid, the aspirations, the motives, the thoughts, the beliefs, the sorrows, hopes and terrors as firm and distinct. Once the senses are shut, time ceases to exist, if in truth it exists at all. Then is the offence of the violation of this hallowed dust so carefully hid away, any the less because it has slept five thousand years, than it would be in the case of a resurrection man who drags it from the grave it has occupied six hours, to sell it to the dissecting-table? We are so apt to judge of the dead by a standard of the possible feelings of the survivors, forgetting that they may have their own feelings. Also the survivors, or rather the departed contemporaries, may still be shocked.

These poor Phœnicians of Amathus had no such high hopes, although from time to time there were plenty in Cyprus who shared them. Yet they built their sepulchres with extraordinary expense and care, facing towards the sea as though they wished to watch the sun rise and set for ever. We break into them under the written order of the British Museum, or secretly by night, and drag their ear-rings from their ears, and their rings from their fingers, and set their staring skulls upon back shelves in dealers' dens in Limasol where once they ruled, to be sold for a shilling—skulls are cheap to-day—to the first relic-hunting traveller. Well, so it is and so it will ever be.

The next tomb we came to had a beautiful V-shaped doorway, though only the top of the inverted V was visible above the rubbish. I did not go in here, being already sufficiently plastered with mud, almost from head

to foot indeed, but my companion, who is young and active, achieved the adventure. As it turned out it might very easily have been his last, for in climbing up the walls of the pit again, his foot slipped on a little piece of greasy earth and down he went backwards, dragging two Cypriotes with him in such fashion that all three of them lay in a tangled heap at the bottom of the hole. The sight was ludicrous enough, but as the older of the two guides explained to us, had it not been for his quickness and address my nephew would certainly have met with a serious accident. The man saw from the way he was falling that his head or neck must strike against a stone at the bottom of the pit, and managed to thrust his arm and thick sleeve between the two. Once my own life was saved in a very similar fashion, except that no human agency intervened. I was galloping a pony along an African road when suddenly it crossed its legs and went down as though it had been shot. In falling my head struck a stone on the road with great force, but by chance the thick cloth hat which I was wearing, being jerked from its place, interposed itself as a kind of doubled-up cushion between my temple and the stone, with the result that I escaped with slight concussion. I remember that the shock of the fall was so great that my stout buckskin braces were burst into four pieces.

That my nephew's danger was not exaggerated by the Cypriote is shown by the fact that, within the last few years, at the mouth of this or the very next tomb a German professor was killed in precisely the same way. Indeed, now that I think of it, I remember reading of his sad death in a paper. The poor gentleman, who was accompanied only by an old woman, having finished his inspection began to climb up the sides of the pit when a stone came out in his hand and he fell head first to the bottom. He only lived about five minutes and our friend, the protecting Cypriote, helped to carry away his body.

After this experience, having had enough of the interesting but dirty pursuit of "tombing," we mounted our mules and rode round the hill of the ancient city, a stone-strewn and somewhat awkward path. The streets there must have been very steep in their day and a walk up to the citadel on business, or to buy a slave or two kidnapped on the shores of Britain as a special line for the Cyprian market, excellent exercise for the fat old wine-bibbing merchants, whose scattered bones and broken drinking-cups we had just been handling yonder among the tombs.

Now the place is melancholy in its desolation. There is nothing left, nothing. It might have formed the text of one of Isaiah's prophecies, so swept of life is it and of all outward memorials of life. I could only find one remnant. On the face of a towering rock we discovered a short uncial Greek inscription which is beginning to feel the effects of weather. Our united scholarship pieced this much out of it: "Lucius Vitellius, the great conqueror, erected this from his own." Here the information comes to a full stop, for we could not make out any more. Perhaps some reader of this page may know with certainty which Lucius Vitellius is referred to and why he was engaged in conquering at Amathus. Is it perchance Lucius Vitellius, the father of the emperor who was governor in Syria, in A.D. 34? If so he might well have described himself as "the great humbug" instead of the great conqueror, as is proved by the famous story that is told of him concerning Caligula and the moon. According to Tacitus, however, he was a good governor. "I am not ignorant that he had a bad name in Rome and that many scandalous things were said of him, but in the administration of the provinces he showed the virtues of an earlier age."

I daresay that yonder crumbling screed may be the only actual monument that is left to-day of this Vitellius, his pomp, his cunning, and his flattery.

As we returned home the scene was very beautiful. In the west the sun sank gorgeously, his fan-like arrows breaking and reflecting themselves from the dense purple under-clouds that had gathered and lay low upon the horizon of the slumbering deep. High above in the fathomless blue spaces of the Cyprian heavens, rode the great moon, now rounding to her full, her bright face marked with mountain scars. And the lights that lay on sea, sky and land, on the plain of Limasol and the mount of ruined Amathus, who shall describe them—those changeful, many-coloured lights, so delicate, so various and so solemn?

On the day after our visit to Amathus I attended the Court-house to listen to the magisterial examination of the men (whose numbers had now increased to six) whom I had seen previously in jail awaiting their trial upon a charge of murder. The court was crowded with the relatives of the accused; *zaptiehs*, or policemen; a selection of idlers from among the general public; a goodly number of Greek advocates crowded together in the front bench, and the six prisoners themselves all squeezed into a dock which was much too small for them, where they stood in a double row listening to the evidence with an indifferent air, real or affected. For the rest Mr. Mavrogordato, as I am told a veritable terror to evildoers, conducted the case for the prosecution, bringing out his points with great clearness, while the district judge, Mr. Parker, sat as a magistrate's court. The judicial functions of the legal officials in Cyprus are by the way rather curiously mixed, the same individual being able, apparently, to sit in varying executory capacities.

The case was opened by the different advocates announcing for which of the prisoners they appeared. Then Mr. Mavrogordato took up his parable and began to examine the Greek doctor through an interpreter, whose somewhat lengthy translations made the proceed-

ings rather slow. When, after a couple of hours, we had just got to the point where he turned the body over, growing weary I went home to lunch. To this hour I cannot say whether or no those reputed murderers, or if any, which of them, still adorn the land of life, or whether under Mr. Mavrogordato's guidance, they have passed beneath that black beam which spans the central well in the old castle at Limasol. I think very possibly, however, that they were all acquitted or reprieved, for although I am certain that they, or some of them, did the deed, from the opening of the case, out of the depths of a not inconsiderable experience of such inquiries, I am convinced that every ounce of the evidence in possession of the prosecution was absolutely and solely circumstantial. Moreover, although they had dug him up again and looked for it, the missing knife-point could not be found in the vitals of the late-lamented cattle-poisoning rascal whom somebody had slain. A broken and recovered knife-point goes a long way with a jury, and its absence is equally favourable to the prisoner.

One afternoon I attended some athletic sports at Limasol. It was a general feast-day, in honour of what or of whom I grieve to say I forget, but on that occasion there were festivities everywhere. Earlier in the day I went for a ride to a village some miles distant which also was celebrating sports, that is to say a few loungers were gathered together about an open place in the hamlet, and nobody was doing any work. This I noticed, however, both in the village aforesaid, on the ground at Limasol, and from the spires of all the churches that I could see, a flag was flying. As it was a public holiday one might have expected that this flag would be English, or perhaps here and there, in deference to ancient and long-established custom, Ottoman. It was neither, it was Greek. Everywhere that not very attractive banner flaunted in the wind. I asked the reason but nobody

seemed to know an answer. They suggested, however, that it had something to do with the Greek churches, and added that the upper classes of the Cypriotes who call themselves, but are not, Greeks, always flew the Greek flag.

I submit that this is not a good thing. Throughout the world and at all periods of its history the flag flown is the symbol of the authority acknowledged, or that the population wish to acknowledge. In Cyprus of course the bulk of the inhabitants are not concerned in this matter. The villagers of the remote hills and plains care little about banners, but if they see continually that of Greece displayed on every church tower and high place, and never, or rarely, that of Great Britain which rules them, they may, not unnaturally, draw their own conclusions. It is a small affair perhaps, but one, I believe, which might with advantage be attended to by the Government. Eastern peoples do not understand our system of *laissez faire* where the symbols of authority are concerned, and are apt to argue that we are afraid to show the colours which we do not fly. The Union Jack is not a banner that should be hidden away in British territory. Nor is this my own view only. It is shared by every unofficial Englishman in Cyprus, though these are few. Officials may have their opinions also, but it would not be fair to quote them.

After the sports were over I had an interesting conversation with a gentleman well acquainted with the customs of the country. He told me that few traces of the old Phœnician rites remain, except that which is still celebrated in some districts upon Whitsunday. Then, as did their forefathers thousands of years since, the villagers go down to the sea and bathe there, both sexes together. It is the ancient welcome given to Venus in the island fabled to be her chosen home, mixed up perhaps with some Christian ceremony of washing and regeneration. The bathers throw water over each other, but so far as

outward appearances go, there is nothing incorrect in their conduct at these quaint and primitive celebrations.

My friend told me also, to turn to another subject, of the vast benefit which the British Government has conferred upon the island by the practical extermination of the locust. All the ancient visitors to Cyprus, or at least many of them, speak of this curse, which twenty years ago, and even on the occasion of my last visit, was in full operation. An ingenious Greek gentleman devised the remedy. Roughly the system is this. Locusts, impelled thereto by one of those wondrous instincts that continually amaze the student of nature, at the appointed season select certain lands wherein to lay their eggs, which must not be too deep or too shallow, and when the pests begin to grow must furnish certain food on the surface of the sandy soil necessary to their support. Observation soon enables skilled persons to discover these spots. Then the system first invented by Mr. Mattei and perfected by my late friend, Mr. Samuel Brown, is brought into operation.

Briefly it consists of the erection of screens of canvas many yards in length edged at the top with shiny American cloth, in front of which screens are dug deep trenches. About a fortnight after the locusts are hatched out of the egg, having exhausted the supply at the breeding-place, they begin their march across country in search of nutriment. Then it is that strange things happen to them, for climbing up the canvas screens which they find barring their path, their feet slip upon the leather and down they slide backwards into the ready-made grave beneath. Before they can crawl up again others tumble on the top of them, and so it goes on till the trench is full. Now observant human beings arrive, cover it in to prevent effluvium and move the screen a few yards further on to another trench that they have prepared, where this page of locust-history repeats itself. It might be thought that learning wisdom—from his

fellows' fate—the locust would in time educate himself to go round the screen. But not so, for of all this insect's characteristics obstinacy is the most prominent. He means to travel a certain path; if it involves his death, so much the worse, at least he will travel till he dies. Doubtless it is this singleness of purpose, this incapability of changing his mind, that makes the locust so great and formidable.

And formidable he is, or was, as any one will know who has ever seen a stretch of growing corn, or a grove of fruit-trees, or any green thing that is of service to man, over which the locust has passed. Joel the prophet knew him long ago, before ever Messrs. Mattei and Brown had at last taught humanity how to beat him (*i.e.* in an island like Cyprus). "He hath laid my vine waste and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white. . . . How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture: yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate." And again—here he describes them at their work. Could it be more wonderfully done, could any words give a more vivid picture of the overwhelming invasion of this bane and the waste it leaves behind?

"A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. . . . Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame that devoureth the stubble."

Such indeed is the sound that has been heard to rise from the millions of their moving jaws.

However, as I have said, thanks to the continued exertions of the Government, locusts are now practically exterminated in Cyprus.

What their ravages have been in the island for ages past may be gathered from a single quotation which I take from the writings of Benedetto Bordone, the geographer,

of Padua, whose work was published in 1528. It is only one example, but it will serve:—

"But among so much good, that there may be nothing in this world without its bitterness, the luck of the island has this one drawback, mingling with its blessings so heavy a curse that men can hardly bear up against it—that a vast multitude of *cavalette* or locusts appear with the young wheat: these as they pass from place to place are so many in number that like a thick cloud they hide the sun: and where they light they devour and consume not only the grain and grass, but even the roots below ground, so that one might say that fire had blasted everything. Yet they use all diligence to destroy these insects, and make a very great outlay to seek out the eggs while they are in the earth, and they do indeed in some years find of them thirty thousand bushels. Besides this they use yet another remedy of a strange kind; they send to Syria to fetch a certain water, with which they soak the ground, and where it is thus soaked the eggs burst and produce none of these insects."

What water was this, I wonder?

CHAPTER IX

CURIUM

CHARMING as is Cyprus in many ways, it is a place where the traveller, especially the English traveller, and still more the unofficial dweller in the land, has some reason to congratulate himself if he was born with the gifts of patience and humility. In practice the island is inhabited by two classes only, the Government officials and the native Cypriotes. Between these there is a great gulf fixed, in itself a bad thing as I think, since it is not good for any man, or body of men, to be continually surrounded by people whom they consider very much their inferiors. In Africa I have known weak folk driven crazy by this plethora of authority, and nine individuals out of ten it makes conceited. Only really large-minded men can bear the weight of unquestioned power and remain unspoiled, men big enough to know how frail and small the rest of us are.

To return — wide as that gulf may be, it is not altogether easy to float there. In other words, an inhabitant who is not an official has no "position" in Cyprus, and is collectively relegated to a class by himself, or so it seemed to me. It is, however, very much to be regretted that this class is not larger. In that event not only would life become less narrow in the island, for red tape in quantity does constrict the intellect; its rulers also would be exposed to the tonic and stimulus of competent and independent public opinion. At present of factious opposition to the Government from the Greek party and others there is plenty, of intelligent and sug-

gestive criticism at the hands of equals and compatriots, little or none at all.

The questions of social status and precedence do not affect the traveller, however, though if he be of an observant mind they may amuse him. What *does* affect him are the hide-bound Cyprian regulations. One I have mentioned, and its inconveniences—that having to do with revolvers—but it is as nothing compared to those which overtake the individual who ventures to come to Cyprus armed with a fowling-piece in the hope of shooting duck or woodcock. I, unfortunate, had sent mine on, and finding it awaiting me at the custom-house at Limasol, suggested that I might take it away. Thereon I was informed very politely that I must comply with a few formalities. First, it proved imperative that I should obtain from the Government at Nicosia a certificate that I was a fit and proper person to be allowed to carry so dangerous a weapon as a shot-gun. Secondly, a value must be set upon the said gun which must be approved. Thirdly, the fourth part of the value thus ascertained must be paid over in cash to the custom-house officer, who, on the owner quitting the island within a certain period of time and satisfying him that he had not disposed of the gun, would repay three-quarters of the total amount so deposited, the Government retaining the rest for its trouble. Fourthly, a game-licence must be taken out. This I think an excellent regulation.

It can easily be imagined that by the time I had written the necessary letters, signed the necessary documents, paid the necessary deposit and interviewed the necessary number of officers, I wished almost that I had thrown my gun into the sea before I was foolish enough to bring it to Cyprus. Even now when the trouble is done with, I venture to ask whether all these formalities are really needful in the case of a person known to be a *bonâ-fide* traveller who proposes to tarry for a few weeks only in the land? The same question

might be asked of other Cyprian regulations and of their method of enforcement.

A more serious matter, as I myself experienced, for which indeed the Government is not responsible, although I think it might take action to prevent the inconvenience, is connected with the Turkish telegraph line which purports to deliver messages in Cyprus. What happens, and has happened perpetually for the last year or so since the cable was hopelessly broken, and intermittently before that time, is that a message taken by the Turkish line, without warning or other enlightenment to the sender in whatever part of the world he may be, passes over their wires to Port Said or Beyrout, where it is left to lie until a ship is sailing. Thence it is sent on by post and re-telegraphed from Larnaca to its address by the Eastern Telegraph Company, for which service is charged a fee of one and ninepence.

In my case I despatched a cable to Italy, by the Eastern Telegraph Company, to which I had previously arranged to receive an immediate reply. No answer came and I grew anxious. Days passed and finally the reply did come, a week late, having been forwarded by post from Port Said! My hostess informed me that within a single year the same thing had happened no less than thrice to people staying in her house. For a specimen result I quote an instance that occurred just before I arrived. The father of a lady who was staying with a friend in the island, died in England, and the sad news was at once telegraphed to her. This message was sent by the Turkish wires with the shocking result that the person concerned first learned of her bereavement through a casual perusal of the advertisement columns of the *Times*. The cable itself was delivered a day or two later than the newspaper.

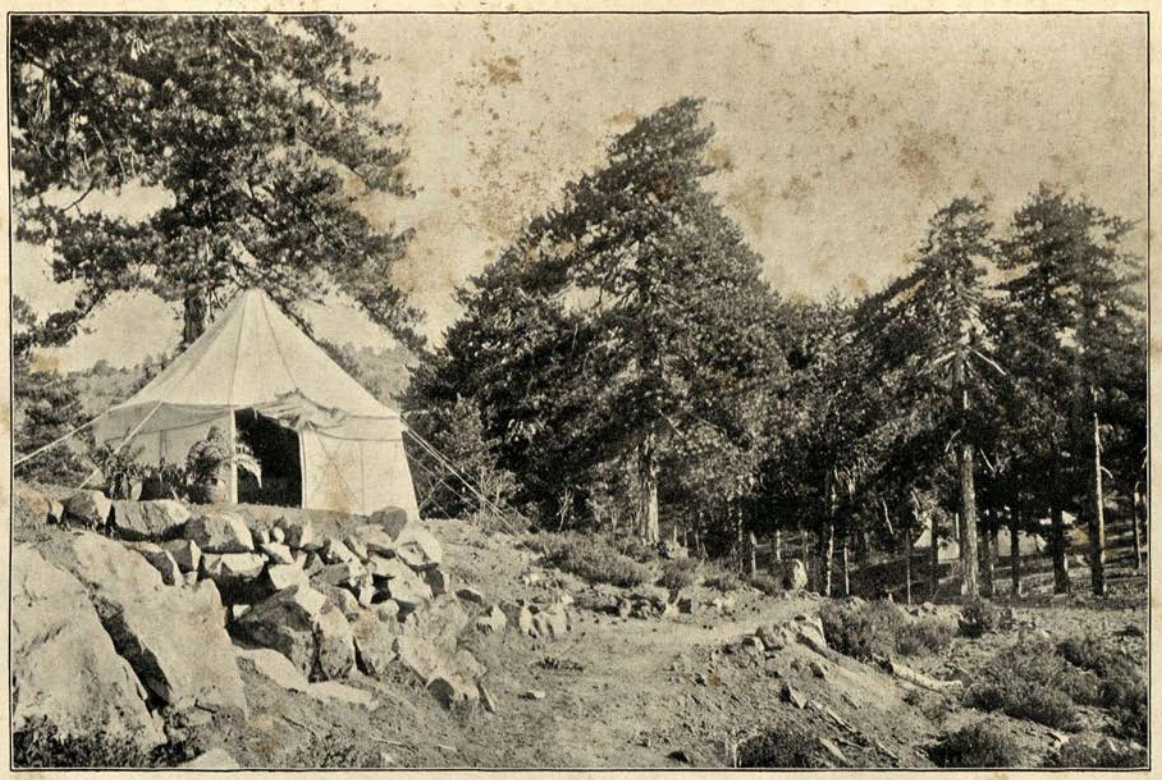
It would seem that the Government might move to put a stop to this constant and intolerable scandal

of a telegraph line accepting and being paid for messages which it has neither the intention nor the means of delivering. I am informed, however, that it does not do so because such action might raise "a political question" and give offence to the Turks. If I were in a position of authority I think that I should take the risk of that offence and of the use of a little plain language.

Still notwithstanding these and other drawbacks, unavoidable perhaps in a country soaked with oriental traditions, Cyprus is in many ways a most delightful spot, and it is remarkable that more English people do not live there, at least for the winter season. Actual residence in the island to all but those inured to heat, involves a three months' stay in summer under canvas or in huts on the mountain heights of Trooidos, whither the officials move annually from Nicosia. This is a sojourn that must become monotonous in spite of the delightful air and scenery of the pine forests, since lawn-tennis parties and picnics, where the guests are continually the same, will pall at last on all except the youngest and most enthusiastic. For the other nine months of the year, or most of them, the climate is pleasant and healthy.

I know that in the last respect, it has a different reputation; arising I believe from the fact, that when it was first acquired from the Turks, some regiments of debilitated troops were sent from Egypt to recover health in Cyprus. Those in authority proceeded to secure this object through the great heats of summer by setting them down in overcrowded tents upon an undrained marsh, where they sickened and died in considerable numbers. Also in old days the island's reputation for wholesomeness was of the most evil.

I have discovered many references to this in the course of my reading, but lack the time to search them out now; also to do so would be to overburden these pages. Here are one or two extracts, however, upon which I am



On Trooidos

able to lay hands, that will suffice to prove the point. They are taken, for the most part, from *Excerpta Cypria*. Felix Fabri writing in the fifteenth century says that on returning from a certain expedition inland in Cyprus—

"When we reached the sea in our galley we found that two pilgrims were dead, one of whom was a priest of the Minorite order, a brave and learned man, and the other was a tailor from Picardy, an honest and good man. Several others were in the death agony. We, too, who had come from Nicosia, cast ourselves down on our beds very sick; and the number of the sick became so great, that there was now no one to wait upon them and furnish them with necessaries."

He goes on to tell how they put out to sea and met with sad adventures:—

"During this time one of the knights ended his days most piteously. We wound a sheet about him, weighted his body with stones, and with weeping cast him into the sea. On the third day from this another knight, who had gone out of his mind, expired in great pain and with terrible screams," and so forth.

Again Egidius van Egmont, and John Heyman, whose work was translated from the Dutch in London in 1759, say:—

"It is known by experience that the inhabitants of this island seldom attain to any great age, owing possibly to the badness of the air; malignant fevers being common here, especially towards the end of summer, and during our stay in the island, though it was in the spring, a contagious distemper swept away great numbers at Nicosia. But the air is most noxious at Famagusta and Lernaca owing to the vapours rising from the fens and saltpans in the neighbourhood. And at Lernaca the air is most unhealthy when the sun is above the horizon."

Also Richard Pococke, whose well-known work was published in London in 1743, writes:—

"These mountains and the shallow soil, which is mostly on a white free-stone, make it excessively hot in summer and the

island is very unhealthy especially to strangers, who often get fevers here, which either carry them off, or at least continue for a considerable time, the disorder lurking in the blood and occasioning frequent relapses."

To come to quite recent times Monsieur Delaroiére, whose book, *Voyage en Orient*, was published in 1836, talking of Larnaca says:—

"We went out to this shrine, which is charmingly situated near a great lake and wooded hills, but the air is very unwholesome. In a visit we paid to the sheik we saw the insalubrity of the place stamped on every face; the pale and leaden complexions testified to habitual fever."

These short quotations, which could be easily supplemented by others of like tenor, suffice to show that the healthiness of Cyprus has always been in bad repute. Why this is so I cannot say, for, given the most ordinary precautions, among warm countries it is certainly the most wholesome that I have visited. I have scarcely heard of a death that could in any way be attributed to climate among the European officials, and children of northern blood seem to flourish there. Probably its reputation may be set down to the lack of those ordinary precautions and the insanitary condition of the place in the past. Few people whose reading has not been more or less extensive know the extent of the mortality throughout all lands in bygone generations. A great proportion of the death rate everywhere was, I am convinced, due to typhoid which nobody knew how to treat or how to avoid. It had not even any specific name except the generic term of "feaver." For proof of this such works as the Verney Memoirs may be consulted. It is probable that a traveller from Cyprus visiting London about the year 1600 might have returned and described the city as most unwholesome.

Living in Cyprus is extraordinarily cheap. A family can flourish there and have many comforts, such as

riding-horses, &c., who at home would be obliged to look twice at a bus fare and consider a visit to the pit of a theatre a great luxury. Servants also are inexpensive and, on the whole, might be a great deal worse. One in a house where I received hospitality was really a very good, all-round man. He went by the name of Cristo or Christ, an appellation common enough in Cyprus, though one from the use of which northern people would refrain. There was a boy also, an amusing young rascal, who when taken into service evidently was half starved. Then he made up for it, for to my own knowledge he could devour a large tin of bad potted lobster with appetite and without ill effects; nor did he shrink from swallowing at a draught a whole tureen of mint-sauce. On such diet he grew wondrous fat.

In Cyprus everybody depends upon the sun, which is presumed to be, but is not, always on show, at any rate in the winter months. Fireplaces in the dwelling-rooms are a luxury introduced by the English, pleasant enough and even needful in January and February. When the sun refuses to shine inconveniences ensue. Thus the washing generally comes home wet and I could discover but one means of airing it—to place the garments which it was proposed to wear on the following day in bed and sleep upon them. This receipt I frequently adopted. Old travellers will know the plan and young ones may note the same.

Fourteen years or so ago when I was there, Cyprus was a very happy hunting ground for the lovers of antiquities. Then many desirable things could still be purchased. For instance there were objects of silver that I suppose must be of mediæval date, or a little later; worked buckles that were worn by the inhabitants on great occasions, round or shell-shaped and very beautiful, of which in those days I obtained several pairs. Also there were curious reliquaries to be worn about the neck, generally fashioned in the form of a hollow cross,

inside of which was placed a bit of saint or some other sacred scrap. Now few such objects are to be found. Nearly all have vanished. I searched the bazaar at Nicosia and every likely place in the other towns, without discovering even a single pair of buckles. I could find nothing except one small reliquary. Veritable antiquities are almost as rare to-day, owing largely to the prohibition that has been put upon private digging in the interests of the British Museum.

On my first visit I was rather fortunate. Thus in a village not far from Cyrenia I bought for a small sum from the man who dug it up, a beautifully worked oriental bowl of bronze, dating, I should think, from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. In this bowl the finder discovered coins which he sold for the sum of three hundred pounds, their value by weight. What coins they were I cannot say, for he had parted with every one and could give no clear description of them.

Also I obtained from him a piece of glass which he had found, that at once struck me as very curious. It is about six inches high, round, with a narrow neck, and its great peculiarity lies in the fact that it has five spirals of glass that spring from near the bottom of the bowl, clearing its arch to join the vessel again at the root of its neck. This vase I carried in my hand on horseback for many a weary mile, fearing accidents, and ultimately brought it safe to England. Here, as I saw that he was much struck with it, I gave it to my friend, Sir John Evans, who read a paper on the piece at the Society of Antiquaries, in whose records it is published.[1] It seems that the vessel is Roman and unique. Sir John Evans ingeniously discovered the method by which it was made, and even caused a replica to be manufactured, how, it would be too long and difficult to explain. This replica I still possess.

Another find was a marble head that once has worn

[1] *Proceedings*, March 13, 1890.

a bronze helmet. It seems to be of a very good Greek style and period. At first I thought that it had adorned a statue of a goddess, but a well-known expert tells me that after taking measurements, &c., he believes it to be a contemporaneous portrait of Faustina, of which lady of that name, I am not certain, but I imagine, the elder. This head, the best thing of the sort that I can find in any Cyprian collection, either in the island or the British Museum, I discovered serving the gentleman who ploughed it up as a door-stop. But although he valued it so little it took me two years to reduce it into possession, as I think that the man who owned the land where it was found, claimed an interest in the marble. Another beautiful object that came my way was a corroded silver ring found in a tomb with an engraved scarabæus bezel. This ring the late Mr. Samuel Brown, who gave me a whole collection of Cyprian pottery, offered to me for any price I chose to fix. But I had spent all my money, so I said that I would take it home and sell it for what I could get on his account. I disposed of the ring for ten guineas to a well-known dealer who passed it on to the British Museum for twenty guineas. Afterwards I felt sad when one of the great experts there informed me that it was the best thing of the sort they had secured for many a day, being, it would appear, an early and exceedingly good copy of some famous work of art by, I think, Praxiteles. And the moral of that is, as the Queen said to Alice, never be economical when you see what your instinct tells you is a good antique, or you will live to regret your virtuous impulse.

Also I procured one or two other objects which I submitted to the British Museum. They said they were worth keeping—and kept them, by way of exchange kindly presenting me with plaster casts edged round with blue paper. Perhaps they are better there. I like to think so.

Now it is otherwise. Except the spear-head already

mentioned, one silver coin of Alexander is all my harvest, and of this I found a better example years ago. About Alexanders, my friend, Mr. Christian, an old resident in the island, told me a wondrous and authentic tale. Some peasants digging, found an earthenware pot and in it nearly a thousand gold coins, for the most part stamped with the head of that monarch. The peasants disposed of them for their weight in gold, and they were afterwards sold by the fortunate purchasers for seven or eight pounds each. Where are they now, I wonder? Imagine the feelings of the happy man who suddenly discovered a pot full of a thousand such coins as these.[1] By the way I remember that a lady once showed me a magnificent necklace made of gold coins of Alexander of different sizes, which had been given her as a wedding present. Perhaps part of that Cyprian find went to make this necklace. But of antiquities I must stop talking, since they may have more fascination for me than for my readers.

Our next expedition was to the site of ancient Curium, which is said by Herodotus to have been peopled by Argives. To reach this ruined city we passed the tower of Colossi and lunched in the police-station of the beautiful and fertile village of Episcopi, a pleasant place for picnics. Thence we rode on a mile or so to the waste that once was Curium, through whole rows of tombs, every one of which are said to have been plundered by the omnivorous Cesnola. In front of us rose a steep hill upon whose face could be seen more tombs or rock chapels. Up this mount we climbed and at the summit came to the ancient city. As usual it was nothing but a tumbled heap of stones, but here the anemones grew by thousands among them and made the place most beautiful. Presently we found ourselves on the site of a

[1] I see that Mr. Hamilton Lang in his book "Cyprus," published in 1878, gives a more detailed account of the finding of this treasure.

temple. The great columns prostrate and broken, the fragments of shattered frieze, and the bits of mosaic flooring revealed by tearing up the sod, all told the same unmistakable story of fallen greatness and a magnificence that time, man, and earthquake have combined to desolate. A little further on we reached a spot where the ground is literally strewn with fragments of broken statues, some of them almost life-size, but the greater number small. I picked up the lower parts of two of these stone statues and put them into my—or rather the *zaptieh's* pocket. As I anticipated, they make excellent letter-weights. What a falling off is here! The effigies of the gods of old—the feet that were bedewed with tears of amorous maidens and of young men anxious to succeed in piratical expeditions, serving as the humble necessary letter-weight! Well, perhaps it is more honourable than to be broken up to fill the shovel of a Cyprian roadmaker.

By this spot is a well or pit which is said to be quite full of these broken statues. Probably they were thrown here on some occasion when the temple was sacked. Picking our path on horseback through the countless stones for two-thirds of a mile or so, we came to another and a larger temple. This was the great fane dedicated to Apollo Hylatus. A wonderful place it must have been when it stood here in its glory, peopled by its attendant priests and the crowd of worshippers flocking to its courts with gifts. The situation on that bold highland brow is superb and must be most splendid of all at dawn when the first level rays of the sunrise sweep its expanse. Doubtless the ancients placed the temple of their sun-god here that it might catch his arrows while darkness yet veiled the crowded town below, the wide, fertile plain which we call Episcopi, and the fields about the Norman tower of Colossi—compared to these old columns but a mushroom of yesternight.

It is not possible, at any rate to the uninstructed

traveller with scant time at his disposal, to follow the exact configuration of this temple of Apollo and its courts, nor indeed if he knew them, would these details be of any great assistance to the imagination. Everywhere are tumbled stones, shattered pillars, some of them elegantly wreathed, overthrown altars and cavernous holes, in the depths of which underground cisterns and passages become visible. In short the cult of the worship of Apollo and his brother and sister divinities—always excepting that of Venus who is immortal—is not more ruined, neglected, and forlorn than this unvisited place, once its splendid sanctuary. Apollo was a joyous god, but evidently he had his stern side. At any rate not far away a headland runs out into the sea, and from its precipitous bluff those who had offended against his majesty—or had differences of opinion with his priests—were hurled to expiate their crimes by a terrifying death. At least so says tradition.

Leaving the temple of the lost Apollo our animals scrambled on through the stones till at last these ceased and we came to a stretch of bush-clad country. This is now one of the Government reserves kept thus to enable the timber of which the Turks denuded the island to spring up again safe from the ravages of man and beast. In such reserves goats are not allowed to graze, for of all animals these do the most damage to young timber, which they gnaw persistently until it perishes. It is not too much to say that where there are many goats no forest can arise. Cyprus in bygone ages was a densely wooded land. Strabo, writing in the first year of the Christian era, says of it:—

"Such then is Cyprus in point of position. But in excellence it falls behind no one of the islands, for it is rich in wine and oil and uses home-grown wheat. There are mines of copper in plenty at Tamassos, in which are produced sulphate of copper and copper-rust, useful in the healing art. Eratosthenes talks of the plains as being formerly full of wood run to riot, choked

in fact with undergrowth and uncultivated. The mines were here of some little service, the trees being cut down for the melting of copper and silver; and of further help was ship-building, when men sailed over the sea without fear and with large fleets. But when even so they were not got under, leave was given to those who would and could cut them down to keep the land they had cleared in full possession and free of taxes."

Alas! far different is the case to-day. The Turks suffered the timber to be destroyed in all save the most inaccessible places, and the wasteful habits of the peasants who, if allowed, will cut up a whole tree to make a single sheep-trough, completed the ruin. So it came about that at last the land which used to supply Egypt with all the wood necessary to build her fleets was almost denuded save on the mountain peaks of Trooidos, with the result that the rainfall lessened alarmingly. Since its advent the British Government has done its best to remedy this state of affairs. As it has no money to spend in planting it has adopted another and perhaps on the whole a more effective method. Although the trees have vanished in Cyprus, by the wonderful preservative agency of nature their seeds remain in the soil, and if goats can be kept off the hills where forests stood, forests will again arise. Thus, although to speak of it anticipates my story a little, it was with a most real pleasure that in travelling from Nicosia to Cyrenia I saw the tops of great mountains which fourteen years ago I remembered naked as a plate, covered to-day with a thick growth of young firs that must now be fifteen or twenty feet in height. A generation hence and those mountain tops will once more bear a splendid forest. Care, however, is required which I do not think is always exercised. The new-formed forest should be thinned, as the wise woodman knows how to do, and the peasants allowed the use of the thinnings. This would prevent their destroying the trees by secretly firing the country, either from

irritation and spite, or to get the benefit of the young grass which springs up afterwards.

In this particular reserve near Curium of which I speak, however, to my surprise I saw a flock of sheep and goats in the charge of a herd. On asking how this came about, Mr. Michell, the commissioner for the Limasol district, who kindly accompanied us and gave us the advantage of his knowledge and experience, told me that the owners of these animals claim ancient rights of which they cannot be dispossessed. These rights endure until the man dies, or sells his flock. They are however untransferable, nor may he add to the number of the animals which he grazes. Thus by degrees the matter mends itself.

In the midst of this bush-clad plain stands the ancient *stadium* of Curium, where according to tradition the old inhabitants of classic times celebrated their chariot races. In considering the place I was much puzzled by one detail. The course is about two hundred yards or six hundred feet long, but according to my rough pacings it never measured more than eighty-four feet at the end where the chariots must turn. I could not understand how three or four vehicles, harnessed with four horses abreast, could possibly manage to negotiate this awkward corner at full speed without more smashes than would tend to the success of the entertainment. On reflection I am convinced that chariot races were not run in this place. It has never, I think, been a hippodrome, but was intended solely for athletic games and foot-running. To this supposition its actual measurements give probability, as they tally very well with those which were common in old days.

This stadium is still singularly perfect; its walls being built of great blocks of stone which here and there, however, must have been shaken down by earthquakes, for nothing else could have disturbed masonry so solid. The visitor can see also where the spectators sat, and in

the midst of that desolate scrub-covered plain it is curious to think of the shouting thousands gathered from Curium, Amathus, and perhaps Paphos, who in bygone generations hailed the victor in the games and hooted down the vanquished. Now the watching mountains above, the eternal sea beneath, and the stone-ringed area of their fierce contests remain—nothing more. All the rest is loneliness and silence. Dust they were, to dust they have returned, and only wondering memory broods about the place that knew them. These relics of a past which we can fashion forth but dimly, seem to come home with greater vividness to the mind when a traveller beholds them, as on this spot, in the heart of solitudes. Seen in the centre of cities that are still the busy haunts of men they do not impress so much.

So we turned back to Limasol, riding by another road along the headlands which overhang the ocean, and pausing, as I did now and again, to watch the wide-winged vultures sweep past us on their never-ending journeys. Very solemn they looked hanging there upon outstretched pinions between the sky and sea, as they hung when the first Phœnician galley rowed to the Cyprian shores, as they will hang till the last human atom has ceased to breathe among its immemorial plains and mountains.

CHAPTER X

LIMASOL TO ACHERITOU

HOPE, almost eclipsed off the Italian shores, rose again like a star at Limasol, for thither came post-cards from the Brindisi Cook saying that our lost luggage had actually been discovered and despatched to the care of the Alexandria Cook, who would forward it at once. Indeed it was time, for one feels, however generous-hearted may be the lender, that it is possible to wear out a welcome to a borrowed dress-suit. The *Flora* came in; we rushed to meet her, but nobody on board had even heard about our luggage. Then followed expensive cables and in due course a fateful answer from the deluded Alexandria Cook: "Cyprus quarantine restrictions forbid shipment."

I confess that at this point I nearly gave way, but recovering, commenced the study of the maritime regulations of Cyprus, to be rewarded by discovering that the importation of "rags and worn clothing was prohibited until further notice." The "worn clothing" referred to, I may explain, are the cast-off garments that have clad the pilgrims to Mecca, or the donkey boys of Cairo. Applied in any other sense no traveller or inhabitant could appear in a presentable condition on the island, since that which they carry on their backs would be "worn clothing." Yet, such is the inexorable stupidity of officials in the East, thus was the clause—none too clearly drafted, I admit—rendered by I know not whom in Alexandria.

Then followed more telegrams, letters of mingled threat and entreaty, and so forth, till many days after-

wards at length the luggage reappeared and with it a very pretty bill. The matter seems small, even laughable when written down in after-days, but at the time it was troublesome enough, especially as the remote places of the earth are just where a visitor must dress most carefully.

On the termination of our stay at Limasol, our plan was to go by sea to Paphos, forty miles away, where our mules would meet us, thence to ride to Lymni where an enterprising English syndicate is attempting to reopen the old Phœnician copper mine, and lastly by Pyrga and Lefka to the capital, Nicosia; in all about five days' hard travelling, for the most part over mountains.

As the time of departure drew near, mighty and exhausting were the preparations. Packing is always a task as laborious to the mind as to the body. But when it means thinking out what is to go on the mules, what to go to Nicosia, what to the final port of departure, what to be thrown away as too cumbersome to carry, and what must be kept with the traveller at all hazards in the very probable event of these various parcels and belongings vanishing away to be seen no more, then positive genius and genius of a peculiar sort is required to deal with the emergencies of the situation. However at last Cabbages, that is the muleteer, departed with his animals on which were laden camp-beds, kettles, pounds of tea, candles, and I know not what besides, with instructions to await our arrival at Paphos. The day passed on and it was announced that the *Flora* was once more in sight.

We went to the office and it was suggested that I should take the tickets. Now Paphos is a harbour where the voyager can only land in fine weather, whence, too, if it be not fine he is carried on to Egypt, where he must wait until the unwearying *Flora* again begins her weekly round. As it happens, in the course of my life I have had some experience of remote places where one cannot land or embark. Indeed a mishap which once I

met with at one of these in a far country entailed upon me a considerable risk of being drowned, a large expenditure of cash, some anxiety of mind, and a five days' journey in a railway train. But although it is rather interesting, I will not tell that tale in these pages.

"I suppose," I said to the agent, "that we shall be able to land at Paphos?"

"Oh! I think so," he replied casually, whereon I intimated that I would wait to take the tickets till the boat came in.

In time one learns to put a very exact value on the "I think so" of a shipping agent. In this instance it assured me that there was not a chance of our visiting the temple of Venus on the morrow.

The *Flora* came in and with her my friend, Mr. Charles Christian, who was kindly going to conduct us upon our tour.

"Shall we be able to land at Paphos?" I shouted.

He shook his head. "All the agents say we can," he said, "but the captain and the boatmen say we can't."

Then resignedly I suggested that we had better give it up, since I could not face the risk of making an involuntary trip back to Egypt. Mr Christian agreed and it was given up, though with great regret, a message being despatched to Cabbages to travel with his mules to Nicosia.

It was a true disappointment to me thus on my second visit to the island, as on my first, to be prevented from visiting the very home of Aphrodite, the place that the goddess chose to set her foot when she rose from the foam of the sea. Not that there is, as I understand, much more to be seen at either Old or New Paphos—Paleopaphos and Neopaphos; they are six or eight miles apart—than among the ruins of other ancient cities in the island. Still I wished to look upon the place where St. Paul once reasoned with Sergius Paulus, the Deputy. What a spectacle even for those ancient shores of Chittim that have witnessed so many things—the mighty Apostle

before the gates of the wanton shrine of Venus, thundering denunciations at the wizard Elymas and smiting him to darkness with the sword of the wrath of God! I desired to have stood upon that road which, as Strabo tells us, "was crowded year by year with men and women votaries who journeyed to this more ancient shrine" from all the towns of Cyprus, and indeed from every city of the known world. I desired also to have seen the tumbled wrecks of the temple, that "sacred enclosure" which Perrot and Chipiez recreate so vividly and well that, as I cannot better them, I will quote their words, where

"everything spoke to the senses; the air was full of perfume, of soft and caressing sounds, the murmur of falling water, the song of the nightingale, and the voluptuous cooing of the dove mingled with the rippling notes of the flute, the instrument which sounded the call to pleasure or led the bride and bridegroom to the wedding feast. Under tents or light shelters built of branches skilfully interlaced, dwelt the slaves of the goddess, those who were called by Pindarus in the scoliast composed for Theoxenius of Corinth, the *servants of the persuasion*. These are Greek or Syrian girls, covered with jewels and dressed in rich stuffs with bright-coloured fringes. Their black and glossy tresses were twisted up in *mitras*, or scarves of brilliant colour, with natural flowers such as pinks, roses, and pomegranate blossoms hung over their foreheads. Their eyes glittered under the arch of wide eyebrows made still wider by art; the freshness of their lips and cheeks was heightened by carmine; necklaces of gold, amber and glass hung between their swelling breasts; with the pigeon, the emblem of fertility, in one hand, and a flower or myrtle-branch in the other, these women sat and waited."

But Aphrodite was against me who serve Thoth, a foreign Egyptian god with whom she had naught in common, and doubtless did not admire, since—except in Ladies' Colleges—learning does not consort with loveliness. So her shrine remains and will remain unvisited by me. I regretted also not being able to examine the copper-workings of the ancients at Lymni with the vast pit whence

the ore was dug, the mountains of slag that lie around, and the tunnel hundreds of yards long which the genius and perseverance of the men of our generation have burrowed through the solid rock with a lake of water above their heads, in search of the lode which is waiting somewhere to make the fortunes of those who find it.[1] Last of all and most of all perhaps, was I sorry not to see the beautiful stretch of mountain country which lies in this part of the island.

Yet it was well that we did not attempt the adventure travelling overland, as for a while we contemplated, for immediately thereafter it came on to rain and rained for days. Now a journey on muleback over the roadless Cyprian hills in rain is not a thing to be lightly undertaken. The paths are slippery and in places dangerous, but worst of all is the continual wet which, wrap himself as he will in macintoshes, soaks baggage and traveller. If he could dry himself and his belongings at the end of the day, this would matter little, but here comes the trouble. The fire made of wild thyme or what not that suffices to cook his food in a police-station or a tent, will not draw the moisture from his clothes or blankets. So he must sleep wet, and unless the sun shines, which in these seasons it often does not do for days together, start on wet next morning. In any country this is risky, in Cyprus it is dangerous, for here, as all residents in the land know, a soaking and a subsequent chill probably breed fever.

I may add that certain passengers, pooh-poohing doubts, went on by the *Flora* to Paphos, to find themselves in due course in Egypt, whence they returned ten days or so later. One gentleman, Mr. Mavrogordato indeed, did succeed in landing, but from another steamer. When the Paphos boatmen learned by signal or otherwise that he was on board this ship, which as I understand, having cargo to discharge, rolled off the port for

[1] Although the main lode is not yet discovered, since the above was written extensive deposits of copper ore have been struck at Lymni.

days, they clad themselves in lifebelts and made an effort, with the result that ultimately he was landed, also in a lifebelt and little else. The journey, I gather, was risky, but there comes a time when most of us would rather take the chance of being drowned than after a prolonged, involuntary tour return miserable and humiliated to the place of starting.

At length came the eve of our departure from Limasol, not for Paphos, but for Famagusta viâ Larnaca and Acheritou. In the afternoon we went for a walk and gathered many wild flowers, and as the sun set I betook myself to stroll upon the jetty. It was a calm evening and the solemn hush which pervaded the golden sky and the sea, still heaving with recent storm, made the place lovely. Some brutal boys were trying to drown a cat, but to my delight the poor creature escaped them and scrambled along the rough planks to the shore. They followed it into the town, and I was left alone there listening to the water lapping against the piers and watching an old fisherman in a fez sitting still as a statue, his line between his fingers. He did not seem to belong to the nineteenth century. He might have lived, and doubtless in the persons of his progenitors did live, one or two or three or four thousand years ago. I smoked my cigarette and contemplated him, half expecting that presently he would draw out a brass bottle, as was the fortune of fishermen in the "Arabian Nights," and thence uncork a Jinn. But the brass bottle would not bite, or the fish either. Somehow it reminded me of another scene—a little pier that runs out into the icy waters of the North Sea at Reykiavik, whence on such an eve as this I remember seeing a boy angling for the flat fish that lie in the yellow sands. Only here in Cyprus were no eider-duck, and there in Iceland rose no minarets or palms.

I do not suppose that I shall see Limasol again, but thus while memory remains I wish ever to recall it, with

its twilight stillness, its illimitable darkling ocean, its quaint eastern streets and buildings, and over all of them and the mountains beyond a glorious golden pall of sunset.

On a certain Sunday—everybody seems to travel upon the Sabbath in Cyprus—the three of us, my nephew, Mr. Christian, and myself, started in a rattle-trap carriage dragged by four scaffoldings of ponies, one of which was dead lame, for Larnaca, about forty-five miles away. There were many agitations about this departure. First of all arrived a sulky-looking Greek, who declared that the carriage could not take the luggage and refused to allow it to be loaded. This was rather gratuitous on his part, as it seems that he had no interest in the conveyance, except some possible unearned commission. Then it was doubtful whether the dead-lame horse could go at all; but after a nail had been extracted from his bleeding frog he was pronounced to be not only fit, but eager for the journey. At this season of the year it is customary in Cyprus to turn the horses and mules on to green barley for three weeks, whence they arrive fat and well-seeming. This is why all draught animals were then so hard to hire.

At length with many farewells we creaked off through the narrow streets and difficult turnings of Limasol, to find ourselves presently in the open country. Here among the springing corn I saw white thorns in bloom, though I think that their species differs slightly from our own; also many carob-trees, some of them in the warmer situations now beginning to form their pods.

Trees, by the way, do not as a rule belong to the owner of the soil. If you buy a piece of land in Cyprus, it will be to find that the timber on it is the lawful possession of somebody else, with all rights and easements thereto pertaining. These must be purchased separately, a fact that makes the possession of property under the prevailing Turkish law a somewhat complicated and vexatious affair.

I noticed that at the extremity of the boughs many

of these carobs, especially in the case of old specimens, were disfigured by bunches of red and rusty leaves. On inquiring the reason Mr. Christian informed me that the harm is due to the ravages of rats which live in the hollow boles and gnaw the juicy bark of the young shoots. Sometimes they destroy the entire tree, but the Cypriotes are too idle to kill them out. They prefer to lose their crop. The goats too damage everything that they can reach, and show extraordinary ingenuity in their efforts to secure the food they love. Thus with my own eyes I saw a couple of these intelligent animals reared up upon their hind-legs, their fore-feet propped together in mid air for mutual support, their bearded heads outstretched to pluck the succulent shoots above. The group thus formed would have furnished an admirable subject for a sculptor, but I have never seen it represented in any work of art, ancient or modern. Perhaps it is too difficult for easy treatment, or it may be of rare occurrence. One of the methods by which Cyprian peasants avenge injuries upon each other, is to attempt to destroy the olive-trees of an offending neighbour by cutting the bark with knives. Some of the olives which we passed upon this journey were disfigured with curious wart-like growths upon their ancient boles, which Mr. Christian informed me, as he believed, had been produced by such acts of petty malice practised perhaps hundreds of years ago. In these instances of course the trees had ultimately recovered.

The country through which we passed was on the whole very desolate. Although a good deal of the land seemed to be under cultivation of a kind, we saw few villages. These, I suppose, lay hidden behind the hills, but in truth the population is scant. Different indeed must it have been in the days of the Roman occupation. Then there were enough people in Cyprus to enable the Jews who had settled there to put two hundred and forty thousand to the sword in the course of a single

revolt, that is, a hundred thousand more than the present population of the island.

After we had driven for nearly five hours and beguiled the tedium of the road by lunching in the carriage, we came to a half-way house or hovel, called Chiro-Kitia, *i.e.* Kitia of the Pigs. Although it looked somewhat dreary in the rain which fell from time to time, it was a prettily situated place, hill-surrounded, fronting a bold brown mountain which lay between it and the sea, and standing over a green and fertile bottom with olive-gardens and fig-trees through which a torrent brawled. The inn itself, if such it can be called, had a little verandah, reached by external steps, half ladder and half staircase. From this verandah we entered the guest-room, which was whitewashed and scribbled over with writings in English, Turkish, Greek, and French; with drawings also whereby long-departed travellers had solaced the weary hours of their stay. This room was stone-paved and furnished with a table, a bench, a bed, and some rush-bottomed chairs. Here the mistress of the rest-house, the mother of several pretty little girls, who were standing about in the mud ragged and bootless, presently arrived with refreshments, a sort of cream cheese that is eaten with sugar, and tiny cups of sweet Turkish coffee accompanied by glasses of water with which to wash it down.

Mr. Christian asked me how old I thought this good woman might be. I replied nearly sixty, and indeed she looked it. He said that she was about twenty-six, and that he remembered her not many years ago as a pretty girl. Since that time, however, she had presented the world with an infant regularly once a year, and her present weary, worn-out aspect was the result.

"You shouldn't have so many children," said Mr. Christian to her in Greek.

"God sends them," she answered with a sad little smile.

This poor woman, with another of her familiar troubles close at hand, was in the unhappy position of being separated from her husband, now doing "time" under the care of Mr. Mavrogordato. She told us that he had come into this misfortune on the false evidence of the keeper of a rival rest-house some few hundred yards away; the only other dwelling in the place, indeed. As to our house and the owner there was a sad, and if true, a cruel tale of how its host, he of the jail, seeking to better his fortunes had put up a mill upon a piece of land at the back of the dwelling; how the rival had waited until the mill was erected and then claimed the land, and various other oppressions and distresses which resulted in assaults, false evidence, and for one of them, a term of retirement. Mr. Christian told me that the story was accurate in the main, and added that out of such quarrels as these come most of the frequent Cyprian murders. It is quite likely that the injured man will emerge from jail only to lie up behind a wall with a loaded gun, thence in due course to return to the care of Mr. Mavrogordato steeped in the shadow of a graver charge.

The scene from the verandah, at least while it rained, was not much more cheerful than the story of our hostess. To the right lay a little patch of garden with nothing particular growing in it, surrounded by an untidy fence of dead thorns. Behind this were filthy sheds and stables, in one of which kneeled half-a-dozen angry-looking camels, great brown heaps, with legs doubled under them, showing their ugly hock-joints. The saddles were on their backs but the loads lay beside them, and resting against these reposed their drivers, smoking; motley-garbed men with coloured head-dresses, half-cap, half-turban, who stared at the wretched weather in silence. In front of the house a pair of geese were waddling in the mud, while a half-starved cat crouched against the wall and mewed incessantly. Presently we had a little welcome excitement, for along the road came a

Turk mounted on a donkey. He was followed by three wives also mounted on donkeys, one or two of them bearing infants, and shrouded head to foot from the vulgar gaze of the infidel, in *yashmaks* and white robes that in such chilly weather must be somewhat cheerless wear. They passed chattering and arguing, their poor beasts piled up behind the saddles with what looked like, and I believe were, feather-beds, for whatever else these people leave behind, they like to take their mattresses. Then the prospect was empty again save for the groaning camels, the geese, the thin cat, and the pretty little ragged girls who stood about and stared at nothing.

Wearying of these delights after an hour and a half or so, as the rain had stopped at length, I went for a walk along the edge of the stream which looked as though trout would flourish there, did it not dry up in summer. Here, growing among the grasses I found several beautiful flowers, ranunculi, anemones, and others that were strange to me. Also I noted our English friends, chaffinches and sparrows, looking exactly as they do at home, only somewhat paler, as is the case with almost every other bird I saw. I suppose that the hot sun bleaches them. One sparrow that I saw flying about was pure white, and the larks of which there are two varieties, crested and common, are almost dust-coloured. By the way these larks never soar like their English cousins.

At length the poor screws being rested, or a little less tired, we resumed our journey, travelling for some distance through hills. What a pity it is that it does not please the War Office to make Cyprus a half-way house for troops on their road to India, where they might grow accustomed to a warm climate without running any particular risk to health. Also there would be other advantages. The great lesson of the present war in Africa is the value of mounted infantry who can shoot, think for themselves, and ride over rough country. What a training-ground Cyprus would afford to such

troops as these. There are horses and perhaps the best mules in the world in plenty; the country is wild and mountainous, and nothing would be hurt in manœuvring men. Moreover every conceivable physical difficulty can be found here and dealt with for practice as occasion may require. There is heat, there is cold, there are droughts and rains, flooded torrents to be bridged and precipices to be climbed; forests to take cover in and plains to scout over; besides many more advantages such as would appeal to a commander anxious to educate his army to the art of war in rough countries.

Why then does not the Government always keep a garrison of say five or ten thousand mounted men manœuvring through the length and breadth of Cyprus? This would assist the island and produce a force that ought to be absolutely invaluable in time of war. Also, the place being so cheap, the cost would be moderate. I give the suggestion for what it is worth.

It was past nine at night when at last we crawled into Larnaca, the journey having taken three hours longer than it should have done owing to the weakness of our miserable horses. Next morning we started for Acheritou near to Famagusta, where we were to be the guests of Messrs. Christian, who are now completing their contract for the great drainage works and reservoirs which have been undertaken by the Government of Cyprus with money advanced by the British Treasury. Of these I shall have something to say in their place.

Leaving Larnaca in a high wind, for the first few miles we passed through a very grey and desolate part of the island, having the sea on our right and flat swampy lands upon our left. Striking inland we halted for a few minutes to look at a curious stone tower of the Lusignan period, in appearance not unlike a small Colossi, which raises its frowning walls among the dirty mud dwellings of a dilapidated, poverty-stricken, Turkish village. There is nothing remarkable about the building

which is now tenanted only by goats and pigeons, except its age. Doubtless it was once the stronghold of some petty noble, built for refuge in times of danger. Afterwards we came to a place, Pergamos, where stood some deserted-looking huts, out of one of which ran a large rough-haired dog.

"That dog is all that is left of the Dukobortzi," was Mr. Christian's cryptic remark.

I inquired who or what the Dukobortzi might be and learned that they are a sect of vegetarian Quakers from the Caucasus distinguished from their countrymen, and indeed the rest of mankind, by various peculiarities. Thus they have no marriage ceremony, all their earnings go into a common fund, and whole families of them sleep in a single room. One of the chief articles of their faith, however, is a horror of killing. This it was that brought them into conflict with the Russian Government, who persecuted them mercilessly because, being men of peace, they refused to serve in the army. In the end the English Society of Friends exported them, settling two thousand or so in Cyprus and another three thousand in Canada. A place less suited to this purpose than Pergamos could scarcely be found in the whole island. To begin with the Dukobortzi are vegetarians, and the land being here unirrigated will only grow vegetables for about half the year. Also the climate of the locality, which is very hot, was not at all congenial to emigrants from the Caucasus with a perfect passion for overcrowding at night. So the poor people sickened rapidly and a considerable number died. Some of them went to labour at the irrigation works, but were quite unable to bear the sun. Then they tried working at night and resting during the heat, but still it did not agree with them. In the end they were helped to join their co-religionists in Canada, and now all that remains of them is the rough-haired Russian dog, which must feel very lonely. They were it seems in most respects an estimable people,

gentle and kindly, but clearly this was no Promised Land for them.

Cyprus seems to be a favourite dumping-ground for philanthropists who wish to better communities that cannot flourish elsewhere. I remember that when I was last in the island some well-intentioned persons had forwarded thither a motley assortment of Whitechapel Jews, who were expected to turn their old hats into shovels and become raisers of agricultural produce upon lands that had been provided for the purpose. Needless to say they entirely refused to cultivate the said lands. The unfortunate Commissioner of the district had been placed in charge of them and never shall I forget his tale of woe. He furnished them with implements, but they would not plough; with seeds, but they declined to sow. As the charitable society in England was endowing them with sixpence a head per diem, and food is cheap in Cyprus, things went on thus until the fund dried up. Then the Commissioner descended full of wrath and interviewed the head of the settlement, who met him, as he told me, clad in a tall black hat and adorned with lavender kid gloves. Much argument followed, till at last the exasperated Commissioner exclaimed—

"Well, you must either work or starve. Will you work?"

The kid-gloved representative shook his head and murmured "No."

"Will you starve?" asked the Commissioner.

Again the answer was a gentle but decided "No."

"Then what the devil will you do?" shouted the enraged official.

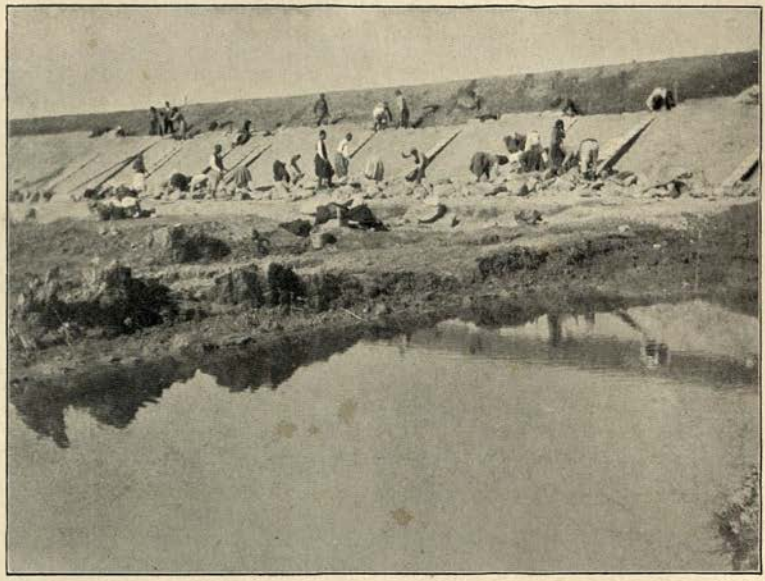
"We will telegraph to the Lord Mayor of London," replied the representative suavely. "In fact, sir, *we have already telegraphed.*"

The end of the matter was that the members of the community dispersed to the coasts of Syria, where, when last heard of, they were understood to be doing well in

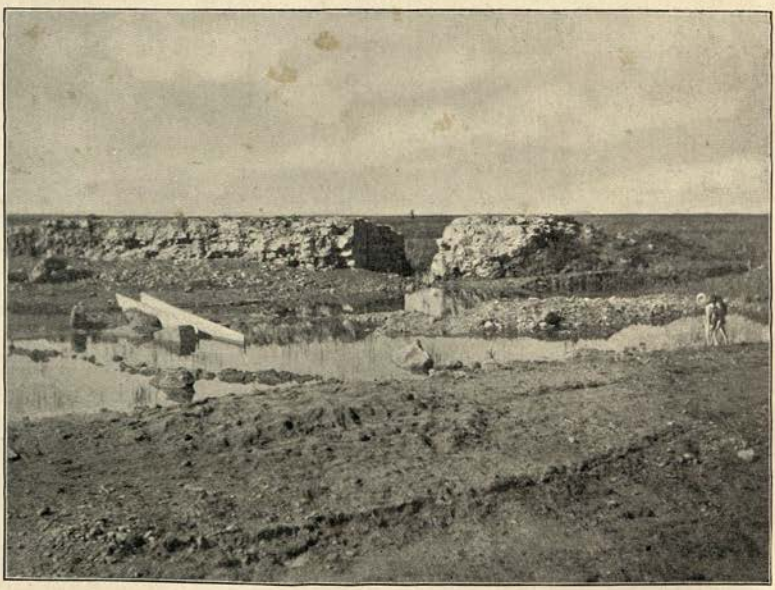
more congenial lines. The Whitechapel Jew has no agricultural leanings. He prefers to till some richer field.

Leaving Pergamos we crossed an enormous stony plain that is named after it. This tract of country, there is no doubt, would grow certain classes of timber very well, and within twenty years of its planting, produce a large revenue. Unfortunately, however, the Government has no money to devote to the experiment, and private capital is wanting.

Next we came to the pretty village of Kouklia and passed the recently finished dam enclosing an area of two square miles, now for the first time filling up with water. Then we began to travel round the great basin of the Acheritou reservoir, which when finished is to include forty square miles, most of which will be under water during the winter season. It is destined to irrigate the lower part of the Messaoria plain, which comprises league upon league of some of the most fertile soil in the world. On our way we came to a stony pass in the neck of two small hills, where I noticed that every rock was scored with rude crosses. It appears that some years ago frequent complaints were received by the ecclesiastical authorities to the effect that this place was badly and persistently haunted, the ghosts being of a violent and aggressive order, given to sallying forth at night with uncanny shouts and leapings, to the great disturbance of peaceable travellers on the highway. Feeling that the thing must be dealt with, every available priest and bishop assembled, and cursed and exorcised those ghosts by all lawful and efficient means; stamping them morally flat and abolishing them so that from that day to this not one of them has been heard or seen. To make their triumph sure and lasting the holy men cut and painted these crosses upon the rock, with the result that no "troll" of dubious origin can now stop there for a moment.



Wall of New Reservoir, Acheritou



Ancient Sluice Gate at Acheritou

At length we saw the house that the Messrs. Christian have built to live in while the works are in progress. It is splendidly placed upon a bluff overlooking the great plain, and from a distance, I know not why, has the appearance of a small ruined temple. Very glad were we to reach it about three o'clock in the afternoon, and partake of a lamb roasted whole in the Cyprian fashion, with other luxuries.

Just below this house start the six miles of massive dam that runs across the plain to form the retaining wall of the vast body of water which is to be held up. As yet this water is allowed to escape, but next winter, when the dam is completed, it will be saved and let out for purposes of irrigation. There is nothing new in the world. In the course of the building of the dam were discovered the remains of one more ancient, also running across the plain, but enclosing a smaller area; indeed its sluice is to be pressed into the service of the present generation. I examined it, and came to the conclusion that the masonry is of the Roman period. Mr. J. H. Medlicott of the Indian Irrigation Department, the very able engineer who has designed these great works and carried them out so successfully, is however of opinion that it is Venetian. Probably he is right. This at least is clear, that people in days long dead could plan and execute such enterprises as well as we do to-day. Roman or Venetian, the stone-work is admirably laid and bound together with some of the hardest and best cement that ever I saw.

The Messrs. Christian, who have contracted to complete this undertaking, employ about three thousand men and women, mostly on a system of piece-work. In the evening I walked along the great dam and saw them labouring like ants there and in the trenches which are to distribute the water. They were then engaged in facing the dam with stone which is fitted together but not mortared, carrying up great blocks upon their backs

and laying them in place under the direction of overseers. At first the provision of this facing stone was difficult and expensive, as the stuff had to be carted six or seven miles; indeed its cost threatened to swallow up most of the contractors' profits. Then it was, that within half a mile of the place where the material was needed, very luckily Mr. Charles Christian in the course of an evening walk discovered an outcrop of excellent stone, soft to work but with the property of hardening in water. The cutters get it out by a simple but effective system, no doubt that which has been followed by their ancestors for thousands of years. A skilled man can loosen a great number of suitable blocks in a day, apparently with ease. When I tried it, however, I found the task somewhat beyond me.

From the strong resemblance of the material I believe that this was the very stone used by the builders of the ancient dam below the house. Doubtless they discovered the quarry as Mr. Christian did, although oddly enough the natives who had lived in the neighbourhood all their lives, declared that nothing of the sort existed for miles around. It was the old case of eyes and no eyes.

I said some pages back that living in Cyprus is cheap, and of this here I had an instance. The house put up by Messrs. Christian for their convenience while directing the works is spacious, two-storeyed, and capitally built of stone, with, if I remember right, a kind of mud roof laid upon rafters covered with split cane mats. Properly made and attended to, such roofs last for years. The whole cost of the building, which was quite large enough to accommodate with comfort seven or eight people and servants, was less than £300, including the large verandahs. In England it would cost at the very least a thousand, and probably a great deal more.

CHAPTER XI

FAMAGUSTA

THAT night a great gale blew roaring round the house as though we had been in Coll, or at Kessingland, instead of southern Cyprus. In the morning the wind had dropped, but the sky was heavy with ominous-looking rain-clouds floating here and there in the blue deeps. After breakfast we mounted the ponies that had been provided for us, a blessed change from the familiar mule, and set out to explore the Messaoria plain and the Kouklia dam. This magnificent plain, which varies in breadth from ten to twenty miles, runs practically the whole length of the body of the island from Famagusta on the east to Morphu on the west, that is, a distance of about fifty-five miles. Once it was a dense forest, now it is open level country cultivated here and there, but for the most part barren. On either side of it, north and south, stretch the two ranges of Cyprian mountains, that of Kyrenia and that of Trooidos, and it is the decomposed, basic-igneous rock brought down from these mountains in the winter-floods by the river Pidias and other torrents that form the soil of the plain.

What a soil it is! Deep brown in colour, of an unknown thickness—it has been proved to fifty feet—and I suppose as rich and productive as any in the world. Hitherto, or at any rate since the Venetian days, two natural accidents however have made it comparatively valueless, that of drought and that of flooding. The greater part of this end of the plain which I am now describing, for instance, has been a swamp in winter and

an arid wilderness in summer. It is to remedy this state of things that the irrigation dams have been constructed, to hold up the waters in winter and pour their life-giving streams forth again in summer.

In the future all this vast area of land, or thousands of acres of it that will fall under their influence, ought to produce the most enormous crops. On this point I see only one fear; upon the top surface of the soil, and in places going a foot or two into it, are little veins of white salty substance, deposited, I suppose, from the floods. These may make the surface earth sour and, until they are evaporated, affect the health of crops. I know that the same thing happens in Coll in the Hebrides, where new-drained lands have to be treated, I think with lime, in order to sweeten them. It is my belief that here, however, one or two deep ploughings and the exposure of the earth to the scorching heat of a Cyprian summer would do this work effectively. I have suggested to Mr. Christian that he should cut out a block, or blocks of soil to the depth of three feet, enclose them as they stand in boxes with the natural vegetation growing on the top, and ship them to me. This he has promised to do, and I shall then submit them for analysis to the chemists of the Royal Agricultural Society, to which I belong, who will doubtless be able to advise as to the nature and power of the salts, and to say what method should be adopted to be rid of them.

Now when flooding is prevented and water will be available for irrigation, it seems to me that upon the Messaoria, if anywhere on the earth, farming ought to pay. I can imagine no more interesting and, as I believe, profitable experiment, than to take up let us say five thousand acres of this area upon easy terms such as no doubt the Government would grant, paying its price for example by a certain tithe of the profit of the produce terminable in a certain number of years. This land might then be farmed by the process, simple, where

labour is so cheap, of making raised roadways to divide it into blocks with an irrigation ditch at the foot of each, along which roadways a pair of steam ploughs could travel, cultivating the expanse between.

Consider the advantages. An inexhaustible soil which the silt from the irrigation water would go far towards manuring, if indeed, with an occasional fallow, other manure is necessary. Fields that can, whenever needful, be absolutely cleaned of weeds and rubbish by ploughing and laying them dry for a few months in the fierce summer sun which kills every root and seed. A great variety of possible crops from cotton down, whereof very often two could be taken in succession in a single season. For instance wheat or barley to be harvested about May, followed by maize to be harvested in autumn. A port, Famagusta, within seven or eight miles, and a splendid market for most products at Port Said, and for the barley in England, where it is much in request among brewers on account of its saccharine and golden brightness. A district where the ordinary cattle and horse sicknesses seem to be unknown except anthrax, which can be avoided with common care; where, moreover, oxen and sheep fatten marvellously upon grasses, lucerne, and the carob beans of the country, and meet with a ready sale at good prices in Egypt. Such are some of the most obvious merits of this neglected plain; added to which must be the ample supply of very inexpensive and fairly intelligent labour.

Of course there are drawbacks also, or the place would be a paradise. To begin with it is very hot in summer, when Europeans must be careful about exposing themselves to the sun, although this heat is generally tempered by the wind blowing up from the sea which is near at hand. Next the Messaoria plain has a reputation for fever. Personally I believe this to be exaggerated, as is shown by the fact that among the three thousand men, women, and children employed by the Messrs. Christian,

the number of casualties from sickness has been very small indeed, and this although they frequently sleep in the trenches of newly-turned earth at all seasons of the year. The doctor, an Armenian, who from his appearance and speech I took to be a Scotchman, and a gentleman who seemed to understand his business very thoroughly, told me however, that occasionally they had cases, resulting for the most part from the use of the swamp water, of a horrible and sometimes fatal ailment which he called "marbled" fever. This sickness is, I believe, known by the same name in parts of Central and South America. Sufferers from it feel icy cold with an exterior temperature that sinks a good deal below normal, whereas the interior temperature is 105° or 106°. The symptoms are those of congestion, I think of the blood-vessels, and indeed congestion is found on necropsy. Also there are other fevers, but the doctor said that they were not common and that the general health was good.

For a long while before their house was built the Messrs. Christian, Mr. Medlicott, and their various English assistants lived as best they could in native huts or tents. Yet I think I am right in saying that during the two years or so while the works have been in progress, none of them have suffered from serious illness, although the nature of their occupation prevented them from refuging from the summer heat for the accustomed three months on Trooidos. This fact speaks for itself, and on the whole I incline to the belief that with ordinary care and precautions, healthy residences and pure water—boiled for preference—adult Europeans of temperate habits would have little to fear from the climate of the Messaoria plain. There is, however, a danger I have mentioned before which cannot always be avoided, that of a soaking followed by a chill, producing fever. This must be risked. After all it is not uncommon in hot countries.

Another drawback is that to prove successful such farming must be under absolutely honest and intelligent

supervision. The casual company manager despatched from England would in eight cases out of ten bring it to financial grief. The farmer should live on the spot, giving his own constant care to every operation. Otherwise those interested in the venture would be certain to hear from time to time that this or that crop had failed. What they would not hear is that the overseer had neglected to irrigate the cotton, or whatever the crop might be, and thus destroyed the prospects for the year, because he was away on a holiday at Nicosia, or perchance had taken a trip to Egypt, leaving a native in charge. But this necessity for the eye of the owner or faithful steward holds good of every business in all parts of the world. "The farmer's foot is the best manure" runs the old agricultural saw.

To sum the matter up, although, being a farmer, and understanding something of the question, I should like to dwell upon it at greater length, I can only say that if I were a young man, owning, or with the command of £10,000 capital, nothing would please me better than to make such an experiment upon the irrigable portion of the Messaoria, near to the Kouklia dam for choice. I believe that, given health and strength, I should return thence in fifteen years or so with no need to farm anything except the fortune I had acquired.

Indeed it is sad to see so much wealth, agricultural and other, lying ungarnered in Cyprus while millions of pounds of English capital, as many of us know to our cost, are squandered in specious, wild-cat schemes at the very ends of the earth. Were the island in the heart of West Africa or China, for instance, companies would be formed to exploit it, and in due course lose their money and the lives of their managers. But as it is only a British possession close at hand nobody will trouble.

The great cry of Cyprus is for capital. Whatever may be the fate of the present copper-mining venture at Lymni, there is no doubt that with enough money the

old lode could be discovered. The same thing applies to the other copper areas: the ancients could not mine deep, the metal must be there, and, now as of old, to the value of sums uncountable; yet nobody will even put down a bore-hole to look for the deposits. In conversation I ventured to suggest to the Governor, Sir William Haynes-Smith, that the Government should do this on their own account, since if once they proved the mines they could make handsome terms with the companies which would come forward to work them. The answer was, "We have no money, the Turkish tribute takes all our money."

This is true. Every year the British taxpayer is informed that a grant of £30,000 has been made in aid of the revenues of Cyprus. He is not informed that never a penny of that £30,000 comes to Cyprus; that, on the contrary, Cyprus has a surplus of revenue over expenditure, even in its present starved condition, of more than £60,000 a year. This £60,000 is taken, nominally, towards paying the tribute of £93,800 per annum, promised to the Turk when we took over the island. The £30,000 annually granted by Parliament, ostensibly in aid of the revenues of Cyprus, goes to make up the balance which cannot be wrung from the island. But—and here is the point—that money is never seen at Constantinople. It stops in the British Treasury. In 1855, a loan of I forget how much, raised by Turkey, was jointly guaranteed by France and England. Needless to say, under these circumstances Turkey does not trouble to pay the bondholders their interest. Neither does France pay as a joint-guarantor, why I know not, but probably because we are afraid to ask her. So John Bull pays. What is more, he was tricked. The revenue received by the Porte from Cyprus was assessed at double its actual amount. Also he pays four per cent., whereas at the present rates of money, on the credit of the British Empire, the loan could easily be converted to one

of two and a half or three per cent. If this were done, practically it would ease Cyprus of its tribute and make it a most prosperous colony. But to do it does not please the Treasury—probably it would involve a good deal of trouble. So year by year we hear of a grant of £30,000 in aid of the revenues of a possession which has an annual surplus of £60,000, that might with assistance and forethought, as I believe firmly, within a single generation be multiplied into a surplus of £600,000. Further, the Turkish tribute might be capitalised; indeed to do our Government justice, I believe that efforts, hitherto unsuccessful, have been made in this direction. But as yet nothing happens.

Another possible source of wealth in Cyprus, as I suggested with reference to the Pergamos plain, lies in the judicious planting of valuable timbers which, as the history of the island shows, would grow here like weeds upon land that is practically useless for other purposes. I must instance one more, that of the wine industry. That Cyprus produced excellent vintages in the past is proved by history—the Ptolemies all got tipsy on them, especially, if I remember right, Ptolemy Auletes, Ptolemy the Piper. To this day indeed, although it is so ill prepared, the wine is good. Mavro is a strong, black, rather rough wine, but I prefer the lighter, white variety which we drank at Limasol. Then there is the vintage called Commanderia, famous in the Crusading times and produced upon certain mountains only. This is of the Madeira class, nutty in flavour and very sweet, more of a liqueur than anything else. Indeed when the Madeira vines were killed out by disease, that island was replanted, I believe, from the Commanderia stock, the original vines, it was said, having come from Cyprus. At Kyrenia, our kind host, Mr Tyzer, the judge, gave us some Commanderia to drink which an old woman had brought round in a wine-skin—she only made a few gallons from a patch of vines—and sold to him at a

price of about twopence a bottle. To my fancy it was a wonderful wine, but perhaps I am no judge of such matters. Other specimens which I tasted struck me as heady and cloying to the palate. This is certain, however, that if the cultivation was carried out upon a proper system, a vintage could be produced that now, as of old, would command a high price. Here again is room for enterprise and capital.

To return to our expedition. We rode for miles across the great plain with the beautiful peaks of the mountains showing in bold outline against the sky to our right. All the way we followed wide dykes in course of being delved out of the rich soil to carry the waters that are to be stored behind the dam. In these dykes hundreds of Cypriotes were at work, most of them Christians, but some, if I remember right, Turkish. Men and women labour together here by the piece. Thus one might see a man and his wife, his sons and daughters, engaged in scooping out their allotted task, which had been already carefully measured and pegged. They all seemed very good-humoured and much chaff went on between them and their employer, Mr Charles Christian, because of the non-arrival of the water-cart upon which they rely for refreshment at their thirsty toil. They were dying of drought, they declared, and he would have to send to bury them, whereupon he replied that it was for the good of their health to make them thinner, and so forth.

At length following the endless dykes and observing many things by the way, such as the character of the grasses, we came to the completed Kouklia dam, a splendid work, on the further side of which the waters are now gathering for the first time. It is curious to see how soon the wild duck have found out this new and excellent home, where whole flocks of these beautiful birds now swim peacefully, keeping themselves, however, well out of gunshot. Thence we turned homeward across

the wide dreary plain that as I hope within the next ten years will be rich with luxuriant crops. Indeed this undertaking has already so greatly advantaged the peasants that, as I hear since I left the island, after their simple fashion they put up prayers in the churches imploring that every blessing may fall upon the heads of Messrs. Charles and Percy Christian. They ought also to pray for Mr. Chamberlain, who might, on occasion, be glad of such spiritual assistance. Whatever may be said against that statesman, this at least is true; he is the best Colonial Minister that we have had for many a long year. A business man himself, he understands more or less, and to a certain extent can sympathise with, the needs and aspirations of the undeveloped countries in his charge. To him and no one else it is due that the spell of consistent neglect has been broken and the small sum of £60,000 necessary for the carrying out of these works has been advanced to Cyprus.

On our return we were overtaken by a heavy thunder rain and soaked. Unfortunately, although the house was quite close to us, we could not gallop home since the downpour made the clay soil so slippery that to do so would have been to risk a fall. Therefore we were obliged to walk our horses and get wet. As a change was at hand, however, in this instance the ducking did not matter.

Towards evening we started on a sporting expedition, so at last the gun that I rescued from the Customs with such trouble was of use. We had hoped for some woodcock-shooting among the scrub on the hillsides, but it was so late in the season that enough birds were not left to make it worth while to go after them. The duck remained, however, and to these we devoted our attention.

The place where we were to station ourselves was three or four miles away, a ridge of rock between two lakes over which the wild-fowl flight at sunset. I was

asked if I would walk or ride, and gaily declared in favour of walking. Before I got back I was sorry for my choice. We waded through swamps, we scrambled along an ancient causeway built of blocks of stone, many of them missing, and over a slope of rough ground to the appointed ridge, where we took up our posts, four of us, at a distance of about two hundred yards from each other. It was a lonely and beautiful spot, set in a bow of the hills like the section of an amphitheatre, its vast open circus lying behind us. In front, looking towards the sea and another lake whence the duck were to come, lay a desert plain covered with low scrub across which the fresh wind whistled. Above was a stormy heaven, splendid to look at but not favourable for fowl-shooting, since the heavy clouds blotted out the light. What is wanted on these occasions is a clear sky marked with light fleecy clouds, for against these it is easy to see the birds as they sweep towards the guns.

I took my place, sitting on one rock and laying my cartridges ready upon another over which my head projected, wrapping myself up also in a coat which I had brought with me, for now the air felt very damp and cold, especially after our arduous trudge. For a long while nothing happened and I was left in the midst of the intense silence to examine the drear scenery, the ancient rocks worn and hollowed by æons of weather, and the flowers and grasses which grew about me. The sun set, the sky darkened and darkened, the black masses of clouds seemed to dominate the earth. At last I heard a sound of whistling wings and about a hundred yards to my right I saw a flight of duck, their long necks extended, shoot past me like arrows and vanish. Then came another flight sixty yards off, or more, at which I ventured a useless shot that echoed strangely along the stony ridge. Now the night fell rapidly like something tangible. One little lot of fowl passed in front of me within forty yards, and of these I

managed to see and bag the last, which fell with a heavy thud fifty yards or more from where it had died in air. After this it was hopeless; the duck had been disturbed too late by the beaters sent to flush them in the pans towards the sea.

On they came in thousands and tens of thousands; the air was full of the rush of their wings, and the earth echoed with their different cries—the deep note of geese, the unearthly call of curlew, and the whistling pipe of teal. Sometimes they seemed to pass so close to me that they nearly struck my head, but against the black clouds nothing was visible except a brown line that vanished almost before it was seen. I fired wildly and once or twice heard the thud of a falling bird far behind, but these I never retrieved. As sport our expedition was a failure; moonlight and a clear sky were needed, both of which were absent. But in its wildness, in the sense of infinite, winged life rushing past us, in the last view of that desolate country as the darkness embraced it, it was a perfect and unique experience. I am old enough to be no longer very anxious for a bag, therefore I enjoyed that evening's expedition with its one resulting widgeon, more than many a day's pheasant-shooting when the slain, carefully raised for the occasion, might be counted by hundreds.

At length it grew pitch dark, so that it was difficult for us to find each other in the gloom. Still more difficult was our homeward journey, steering by the appropriate light of Venus which glowed before us, lying low upon the sky. First came the causeway. This relic of antiquity which shows how careful its inhabitants, now so long dead, once were about their roads in Cyprus, is some eight feet wide and built of large blocks of stone. On either side of it lie the waters of the swamp, several feet deep in places. Much of this massive raised roadway has been destroyed by floods or other accidents of time, so that here and there one must leap from block

to block or subside into the pools between. Now "Stepping-Stones by Starlight" would make a good title for a novel but are in fact an awkward path, and very glad was I when with the assistance of a Cypriote, who seemed to be able to see in the dark, I had negotiated the last of them. After these stepping-stones we advanced over a mile or two of greasy mud about six inches deep. Then came some ploughed patches of ground with ditches in them, and another long stretch of mud, this time covered with water. Struggling to its edge we found ourselves on a path strewn with boulders, and fell down in deep but invisible ruts. Next followed a stroll through a large patch of standing barley which was reeking wet and reached almost to our middles, where we were exposed to the attentions of the "skilos" or homeless dogs, which in Cyprus are such a nuisance. At last, however, about nine o'clock we saw the welcome lights of home. I confess that I was glad to reach its shelter, thoroughly tired out as I was and absolutely wringing wet with perspiration, a fruit of the labours of that interminable walk. Little expeditions of this sort teach us that we are not so young as once we were. Still I enjoyed our abortive duck-hunt.

My nephew, fired by the sight or rather the sound of more wild-fowl than he had ever dreamt of, announced his intention of being back at the place by the first streak of dawn to catch the birds as they passed from the marshes out to sea. I congratulated him upon his superb energy, but declined to share the adventure, foreseeing in the depths of my experience as in a magic crystal exactly what would happen. It did happen. About an hour after we had finished breakfast on the following morning, two hot and weary young men appeared carrying guns and cartridges, but nothing else. They had risen a little too late, the duck were up before them and they reached the distant ridge just in time to see the last flock of geese vanishing seaward.

DESDEMONA'S TOWER, FAMAGUSTA

RUINS OF ANCIENT CHURCH, FAMAGUSTA

The rains had departed for the present and the day was lovely, with so clear an air that every little peak and pinnacle of the mountains seemed close at hand. It was with great regret that on so fair a morning we bade farewell to our hosts and started for Famagusta. I should have liked to stay longer at Acheritou. The place has many charms, not the least of which is its solitude.

The tower, where according to ancient tradition Desdemona was actually stifled by Othello, is an odd place for picnics, yet thither on our arrival we were escorted through the ancient gates of Famagusta. Indeed the feast was spread exactly where the poor victim lived and died, that is, if ever she existed beyond the echoes of romance.

In the Venetian days Famagusta, which is said to be built upon the site of the ancient Arsinoë, was a great commercial port. Now its harbour is choked and, principally because of the heat within the walls, such population as remains to the place lives about a mile away, in a new town called Varoshia. How am I to describe this beautiful mediæval monument! An attempt to set out its details would fill chapters, so I must leave them to the fancy of the reader. The whole place is a ruin. Everywhere are the gaunt skeletons of churches, the foundation walls of long-fallen houses, and around, grim, solid, solemn, the vast circle of the rich-hued fortifications. What buildings are here! Millions of square yards of them, almost every stone, except where the Turks have cobbled, still bearing its Venetian mason's mark. Walls thirty feet thick; great citadels; sally ports; underground foundries still black with the smoke of Venetian smithies; fragments of broken armour lying about in the ancient ash-heaps; water-gates, ravelins, subterranean magazines; gun embrasures, straight and enfilading; enormous gathering-halls now used as grain-stores; tortuous, arched vaults of splendid masonry, the solid roof-stones cut upon the bend; piers running out to

sea commanding the harbour mouth; every defence and work known to mediæval warlike art. Then round them all, hewn in places through the solid rock, the mighty ditch sixty feet or more in depth. It was an impregnable stronghold this Famagusta, and in the end it fell to the power of the greatest of all generals, Hunger, and not through the batterings of Mustafa the Moslem, known as the Destroyer, and his vast army.

The Turk came and conquered, how I will describe presently, and from that hour the glory of Famagusta departed. To begin with, no Christian was allowed to live within the gates. Even the visitor of distinction must not ride or drive there, but walk humbly as became a representative of a conquered faith. "Where the Turk sets his foot, there the grass will not grow," but here the saying is reversed, the grass grows everywhere amid the empty walls. Indeed barley is sown where men dwelt in thousands, and the Christian churches, some of them, were turned into baths for the comfort of the Mussulman, while the rest rotted into ruin. One of the three hundred and sixty-five of these ruined fanes—it is said that there were this number—that of St. Peter and St. Paul, a very noble and beautiful building, is now a Government grain-store, a desecration which I do not think ought to be allowed under the rule of England.

The grand Gothic cathedral wherein lie the bones of many knights and noted men of the Lusignan period, whose wealth, intelligence, and labour reared it up, is now a mosque. I am not learned enough to describe its architecture in detail, this should be left to those who understand such matters. I can only say that it is lovely. In the front are three pointed, recessed arches, the centre pierced by the doorway surmounted with exquisite carved work. Above are three windows in similar style, all of them now walled up, and above them again two ruined towers. Fixed on to one of these, that to the left of the spectator as he faces the building, is a

wretched and incongruous Moslem minaret, a veritable pepper-pot. Within the place is bare and empty, with here and there a carpet, or a tawdry pulpit.

Is it right, I ask, now that the country is again in the hands of a Christian power, that this ancient shrine dedicated in the beginning to the God we worship, should be left in the hands of the followers of Mahommed? I say, and the remark applies also to the cathedral at Nicosia, that in my humble judgment this is wrong. A matter of policy, that is the answer. But has policy no limits? Would it be so very hard and dangerous for this great empire to say to those Turks who are now its subjects: "This is a Christian place which your fathers snatched with every circumstance of atrocity and violence from Christians. Take your shrines elsewhere. The land is wide and you are at liberty to set your altars where you will." It is true that they might answer: "Does it lie in your mouth to protest when you turn other buildings equally sacred in your eyes into grain-stores, and clerks sit upon their altars to take count?"

For generations the Turks have used Famagusta as a quarry, exporting most of the stone of its old buildings to Egypt. Now, it is commonly said, our Government proposes to follow their evil example, since the present railway and harbour scheme involves the destruction of the beautiful curtain-wall abutting on the sea and the use of the material it contains in the projected works. I have been assured by a competent engineer and others who can judge, that such an act of vandalism is absolutely unnecessary; that this monstrous thing will be done, if it is done, principally for the sake of the shaped stone that lies to hand. Will nobody stop it? If the Colonial Office refuses to intervene, where are the Company of Antiquaries and where is Public Opinion? Where too is the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments?

Famagusta is one of the most perfect specimens of

mediæval fortification left in the world. It can never be reproduced or reborn, since the time that bred it is dead. Now in our enlightened age, when we know the value of such relics, are the remains of the old city to be wantonly destroyed before our eyes? I trust that those in authority may answer with an emphatic "No."

In itself the scheme for clearing out the ancient harbour and making of Famagusta a port connected by railway with Nicosia is good. But the haven thus reconstructed, although old Sir John Mandeville, more regardless of the truth than usual even, declares that it was one of the first harbours of the sea in the world,[1] can never be of great importance or competent to shelter liners and men-of-war. Also I imagine that it will be incapable of defence except by sea-power. Now at Limasol it is different. There, owing to the natural configuration of the shore, a harbour where fleets might ride could be made with two entrances far apart, and having seven or eight miles of high land between it and the ocean, so that in practice nothing could touch the vessels that lay within. The necessary dredging would of course cost a good deal, although the bottom to be acted upon is soft and kindly. Perhaps the total expenditure might mount up to a million and a half, or even two millions, the price of a few battle-ships. Battle-ships are superseded in a score of years; the harbour, with proper care, would remain for centuries. We need such a place in this part of the Mediterranean. Is not the question worth the serious care of the Admiralty and the nation?

[1] In the same passage this king of travellers—and their tales—tells us that in Cyprus they "hunt with papyons," which are "somewhat larger than lions." The "papyons" are not quite imaginary, since cheetahs were used for sporting purposes in mediæval Cyprus. When Sir John goes on to add, however, that the inhabitants of Cyprus in search of coolness "make trenches in the earth about in the halls, deep to the knee, and pave them and when they will eat they go therein and sit there," we wonder if he was well informed. The preceding passage also, which unhappily cannot be quoted, makes us marvel even more.

CHAPTER XII

THE SIEGE AND SALAMIS

I COULD see but few changes in Famagusta since I visited it fourteen years ago. Trees have grown up round the tombs where the execrable and bloody Mustafa and some of his generals lie buried; also the Commissioner, Mr. Travers, has planted other trees in portions of the moat where they do not flourish very well owing to the stony nature of the subsoil. Moreover, a large fig-tree which I remember growing in the said moat has vanished—I recall that I myself found a Cyprian woman engaged in trying to cut it down, and frightened her away. Probably when we had departed, she returned and completed the task. Lastly, when I was here before the iron cannon-balls fired into the city by the Turks three centuries since, still lay strewn all about the place as they had fallen. Now they have been collected into heaps, or vanished in this way or in that. Otherwise all is the same, except that Time has thrust his finger a little deeper into the crevices of the ruined buildings.

What a tragedy was the siege of Famagusta! Probably few of my readers, and of the British public at large not one in every hundred thousand, have even heard of that event. Yet if it happened to-day the whole world would ring with its horror and its fame. The Boer war that at present fills the newspapers and the mouths of men has, to this day of writing, cost us at the outside six thousand dead. At the siege of Famagusta, taking no account of those in the city, if I remember right for I quote from memory, more than

forty thousand of the attacking force alone perished beneath the walls.

This in brief was the tale as it is told by Fra Angelo Calepio of Cyprus, an eye-witness and a doctor in theology of the order of Preachers, and others. In the year 1570, according to Fra Angelo, the Sultan Selim was persuaded by his head *mufti* to undertake the enterprise of the conquest of Cyprus from the Venetians: "avarice, lust of fame, difference of religion, diabolic suggestion, divine permission, an unbounded appetite for new territory to be added to the Ottoman dominion, these were the remote causes for the conspiracy against Cyprus. A nearer cause was the wish of Selim, the Emperor of the Turks, to build a mosque and school." Cyprus was to furnish the revenues for this pious enterprise. Fra Angelo says also that the Sultan was influenced to the conquest of the island "from his fondness for its excellent wines and the beautiful falcons that are taken there."

A great army was collected and allowed, owing to the mismanagement of affairs by the Venetians and local authorities, to invest the inland capital of Nicosia. After a gallant defence by the untrained troops and inhabitants within, they took the town. It is curious to read to-day, that grim badinage such as has recently been practised by the Boers investing Ladysmith, was indulged in by the Turks at Nicosia. Thus they drove a donkey up the wrecked wall crying in mockery, "Don't hurt the poor ass, it can do you no harm," and shouted, "Surrender, for you are in a bad way."

The horrors that occurred when once the Turkish soldiers were inside Nicosia are too dreadful to dwell on. Here is a single example. Says Fra Angelo: "Among the slain were Lodovico Podochatoro and Lucretia Calepia, my mother, whose head they cut off on her serving-maid's lap. They tore infants in swaddling-clothes from their mothers' breasts, of whom I could baptize only one," and so forth. On the day following the sack the best-looking

of the surviving lads and girls were sold by auction, "the buyers taking no thought or count of their noble birth, but only of the beauty of their faces." But these poor victims, or most of them, were not destined to serve as slaves in any Turkish harem. The great galleon of Muhamites and two other vessels were laden with them as a gift to the Sultan, to Mehmed Pasha, and Murad the Sultan's son. But some noble girl or woman, her name is not recorded though surely her glory should live on for ever, thinking that the death of herself and her companions was preferable to so infamous a fate, contrived to creep to the magazine and fire it, with the result that the galleon and two other ships with every living soul on board of them were blown into the air. The incident is in perfect keeping with the horrid history of that period throughout Europe.

Famagusta was invested by Mustafa and between one and two hundred thousand soldiers and adventurers upon September 18, 1570, the defence being under the charge of the immortal Mark Antonio Bragadino, the captain of the city. For nearly eleven months did the little garrison and townsfolk hold out, with but scant aid from Venice. They beat back assault after assault—there were six or eight of them; they mined and countermined; they made sallies and erected new defences as the old were battered down; in short they did everything that desperation could contrive or courage execute. At length when only five hundred Italian soldiers and a few Cyprian men and women were left sound within their gates, and many of their walls and towers had been blown into the air, it was want that conquered them, not the Turk.

"The position of the city was now desperate; within the walls everything was lacking except hope, the valour of the commanders, and the daring of the soldiers. The wine was exhausted, neither fresh nor salted meat nor cheese could be had except at extravagant prices. The horses, asses, and cats

were consumed. There was nothing to eat but bread and beans, nothing to drink but vinegar and water, and this too soon failed!"

Then after between 140,000 and 170,000 cannon-balls, many of which I have seen lying about to this day, had been fired into the city, and the Turks had suffered a loss of from thirty to fifty thousand men, at length the brave Bragadino negotiated an honourable surrender under the terms of which the defenders were to be given their arms, lives, and goods, "a safe-conduct to Candia under an escort of galleys," and the townsfolk the grace of staying "in their houses to enjoy what was their own, living like Christians without any molestation therefor."

Upon these terms peace was signed, and the soldiers began to embark in the vessels provided for them. The next evening, or at any rate upon that of August the 5th, the Signor Bragadino, accompanied by about a dozen officers and attended by a guard of fifty men, according to Fra Angelo, and nearly two hundred according to Bishop Graziani, paid a visit to Mustafa who received him courteously and kindly, praising the valour of the defence. The visit concluded, they rose to take leave, whereupon Mustafa asked that the prisoners captured during the siege might be sent to him. Bragadino replied that he had no prisoners. Then the Turk, pretending to be astonished, shouted out, "They were then murdered during the truce," and bade his soldiers who stood ready to seize and bind the Christians.

Now it was that the brutal ruffian, Mustafa, showed himself in his true colours. The story is best told in the words of Mr. Cobham's translation of Fra Angelo Calepio, although Bishop Graziani's account as rendered by Midgley is almost as good.

"They were defenceless, for they were compelled to lay aside their arms before entering the tent, and thus bound were led one by one into the open square before the tent, and cut to

pieces in Mustafa's presence. Then twice and thrice he made Signor Bragadino, who showed no sign of fear, stretch out his neck as though he would strike off his head, but spared his life and cut off his ears and nose, and as he lay on the ground Mustafa reviled him, cursing our Lord and saying, 'Where is now thy Christ that He doth not help thee?' The general made never an answer, but with lofty patience waited the end. Count Hercule Martinengo, one of the hostages, was also bound, but was hidden by one of Mustafa's eunuchs until his chief's fury was passed. He did not slay him, but doomed him, as long as his soul cleaved to his body, to continual death in life, making him his eunuch and slave, so that happy he had he died with the rest a martyr's death. There were three citizens in the tent, who were released, but the poor soldiers bound like so many lambs were hewed in pieces, with three hundred other Christians, who never dreamed of such gross perfidy, and impious savagery. The Christians who were already embarked were brutally robbed and thrown into chains.

"The second day after the murders, August 7th, Mustafa first entered the city. He caused Signor Tiepolo, Captain of Baffo, who was left in Signor Bragadino's room, to be hanged by the neck, as well as the commandant of the cavalry. On August 17th, a day of evil memory, being a Friday and their holiday, Signor Bragadino was led, full of wounds which had received no care, into the presence of Mustafa, on the batteries built against the city, and for all his weakness, was made to carry one basket full of earth up and another down, on each redoubt, and forced to kiss the ground when he passed before Mustafa. Then he was led to the shore, set in a slung seat, with a crown at his feet, and hoisted on the yard of the galley of the Captain of Rhodes, hung 'like a stork' in view of all the slaves and Christian soldiers in the port. Then this noble gentleman was led to the square, the drums beat, the trumpets sounded, and before a great crowd they stripped him, and made him sit amid every insult on the grating of the pillory. Then they stretched him on the ground and brutally flayed him alive. His saintly soul bore all with great firmness, patience, and faith: with never a sign of wavering he commended himself to his Saviour, and when their steel reached his navel he gave back to his Maker his

truly happy and blessed spirit. His skin was taken and stuffed with straw, carried round the city, and then, hung on the yard of a galliot, was paraded along the coast of Syria with great rejoicings. The body was quartered, and a part set on each battery. The skin, after its parade, was placed in a box together with the head of the brave Captain Hestor Baglione, and those of S. Luigi Martinengo, G. A. Bragadino, and G. A. Querini, and all were carried to Constantinople and presented to the Gran Signor, who caused them to be put in his prison, and I who was a captive chained in that prison as spy of the Pope, on my liberation tried to steal that skin, but could not."

According to Johannes Cotovicus, or Johann van Kootwick, a Hollander whose work was published at Antwerp in 1619, this hideous execution of Bragadino was carried out by a Jewish hangman. The same author tells us that the martyr's skin was in the end purchased at a great price by his brother and sons, and, five-and-twenty years after the murder, buried in a marble urn in the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo at Venice. Here is the inscription and a translation:—

D. O. P.
M. Antonii Bragadeni dum pro fide et patria
Bello Cyprio Salaminæ contra Turcas constanter
Fortiterq. curam principem sustineret longa
Obsidione victi a perfida hostis manu ipso vivo ac
Intrepide sufferente detracta
Pellis
Ann. Sal. CIↃ. IC. LXXI. XV. Kal. Sept. Anton. fratris
Opera et inpensa Byzantio huc
Advecta
Atque hic a Marco Hermolao Antonioque filiis
Pientissimis ad summi Dei patriæ paternique nominis
Gloriam sempiternam
Posita
Ann. Sal. CIↃ. IC. LXXXXVI. vixit ann. XLVI.

To God the Best and Mightiest.

The skin of Mark Antony Bragadino, torn from him while alive and suffering fearlessly, by the faithless hand of the enemy, on the eighteenth day of August, in the year of our Salvation 1571, when, in the Cyprian war waged against the Turks for faith and fatherland, he was overborne in the long siege of Salamis, where he commanded with constancy and valour, was brought hither from Byzantium by the care and at the cost of his brother Antony, and laid here by his devoted sons, Mark Hermolaus and Antony, to the eternal glory of God most High, of their country, and their father's name, in the year of our Salvation 1596. He lived forty-six years.

In this inscription it will be observed that the besieged town is spoken of as Salamis, that being the name of the ancient ruined city which stood a few miles from Famagusta.

Thus Famagusta and with it all Cyprus fell into the power of the Turk, who for three centuries ruled it as ill as only he can do. Now once more it has passed into the hands of England. Long may this fair and fruitful island abide there, to its own benefit and that of the empire.

One sad change I noticed on this my second visit to Famagusta. Fourteen years ago the gardens of Varoshia, as the present town is called, were full of the most lovely orange-trees. Even at this distance of time I can recall the pleasure with which I walked in one of them, smelling the scent of the flowers and considering the golden fruit and green, shiny leaves. Now they are all dead, or nearly so. The blight of which I have spoken upon a previous page, in the absence of remedies that their owners were too idle to apply, has slain them. Here and there stick up old stems with blackened foliage and some shrivelled fruit, sad mementoes of the past that would be better done away.

Often have I wished that I could paint but never more so, I think, than at Famagusta, especially one

morning when I stood upon the lonely seashore looking out across the still more lonely ocean. Storm-clouds were gathering, and in their blackest shadow, old as the walls of Famagusta perhaps, stood a single giant fig-tree, its buds just bursting into points of crinkled, green-gold leaf. There was something very strange about the aspect of that tree. It looked as though it lived and suffered; it reminded me, fantastically enough, of the tortured Bragadino. Its natural bent was sideways and groundwards, but the straight branches, trained thus by centuries of wind, lay back from the sloping trunk like the outblown hair of a frightened fleeing woman. In colour it was ashen, the hue of death, only its roots were gold-tinted, for the shifting sand revealed them, gripping and strangling each other like hateful yellow snakes. It was such a tree as the Saviour might have cursed for barrenness, and the site seemed appropriate to its aspect. About it were the sand-dunes, behind it lay a swamp with dead and feathered grasses shivering in the wind. To the right more sands, in front the bitter sea, and to the left, showing stately against a background of gloom, the cathedral of Famagusta still royal in its ruins. As I stood a raven flew overhead, croaking, and a great fox darker than our own in colour, loped past me to vanish among the dunes.

Altogether it was a scene fitted to the brush of an artist, or so I thought.

Within three miles or so of Old Famagusta lie the ruins that were Salamis, formerly the famous port of the Messaoria plain, where once St. Paul and Barnabas "preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." It was a town eight hundred years before Christ was born however, for a monument of Sargon the Assyrian tells of a certain king of Salamis, and until the reign of Constantine the Great when an earthquake destroyed it, it flourished more than any other Cyprian city. Now not even a house is to be found upon its vast site, and

the harbour that was always full of ships, is quite silted up. Many of the stones also that made its palaces and temples, have been built into the walls and churches of Famagusta, to find often enough an ultimate home in Egypt, whither the Turks exported them.

One day we visited this place. On our left as we went our host, Mr. Percy Christian, pointed out to me a tumulus, in Cyprus a rare and notable thing. Some years ago he opened it, indeed the scar of that operation is still visible. Tunnelling through the outer earth the workmen came to a most beautiful tomb, built of huge monolithic stones fitted together with an accuracy which Mr. Christian describes as marvellous. As it proved impossible to pierce these stones, the visitors were obliged to burrow lower and force a passage through the floor. I could not, I confess, help laughing when Mr. Christian added that to his intense disgust he discovered that other antiquarians, in some past age, had attacked the sepulchre from the further side of the mound. They also had been beaten by the gigantic blocks. They also had burrowed and made their visit through the floor. Moreover, by way of souvenir they had taken with them whatever articles of value the tomb may have chanced to contain.

Even sepulchre-searching has its sorrows. I am afraid that if after those days and weeks of toil, it had been my fortune, full of glorious anticipation, to poke my head through that violated floor merely to discover in the opposite corner another hole whereby another head had once arisen, I should have said how vexed I was and with some emphasis. He who labours among the tombs should be very patient and gentle-natured—like Mr. Christian.

Almost opposite to this tumulus is a barrow-shaped building also composed of huge blocks of stone, set in an arch and enclosing a space beneath of the size of a small chapel out of which another little chamber opens. This is called the tomb of St. Katherine, why I do not know.

From its general characteristics I should imagine that it is of the Mycenian period, if the Mycenians understood how to fashion an arch. The individual blocks are truly huge, and it is nothing short of marvellous that men of the primitive races were able to handle them. It seems probable that this sepulchre and that in the opposing tumulus date from the same age. Perhaps both the tombs were first built upon the level with the design of covering them in beneath mounds of earth. In this event we may conclude that the reputed burying-place of St. Katherine was never finished or occupied by any distinguished corpse. At least it is a curious and most durable monument of the past.

All this district is very rich in tombs. Near by is the village of Enkomi where Mr. Percy Christian, digging on behalf of the British Museum, recently found the Mycenian gold ornaments now to be seen in its Gold-room. These Enkomi tombs are not structurally remarkable and lie quite near the surface. Indeed they were first discovered by the accident of a plough-ox putting his hoof into one of them. At the period of their construction, however, evidently it was the habit of the people who used them as their last resting-places, to bury all his most valuable possessions with the deceased. Thus one of the graves appears to have been that of a jeweller, for in it were found solid lumps of gold sliced from cast bars of the metal, as well as fashioned trinkets.

In many instances they have been plundered in past days, although when this has happened the conscience of the ancient tomb-breakers, more sensitive than that of us moderns, generally forbade them to take everything. Thus in one tomb which Mr. Charles Christian entered, though this was not at Enkomi, he found a portion of a splendid beaker, worth £60 or £70 in weight of gold, which fragment very clearly had been wrenched from the vessel and thrown back into the grave. It is a common thing in such cases to find that all valuables have been

removed except a single ear-ring, or one bead of a necklace, left among the mouldering bones to appease the spirit of the dead. Obviously these poor ghosts were not supposed to possess more intelligence than the domestic hen which, after all the rest have been removed, will continue solemnly to sit upon a single egg, even if it be of china.

In one of the Enkomi tombs Mr. Percy Christian discovered the unique ivory casket which is now in the British Museum and valued there, I understand, at thousands of pounds.

The story of its finding is curious, and shows how easily such precious treasures may be missed. The actual clearing of the tombs from loose earth and rubbish is of necessity generally left to experienced overseers. On a certain evening Mr. Christian came to the diggings and was informed by the head man that he had carefully excavated and sifted out this particular grave, finding nothing but a few bones. By an after-thought, just to satisfy himself, Mr. Christian went into the place with a light and searched. Seeing that it was as bare as the cupboard of Mother Hubbard, he was about to leave when by a second after-thought—a kind of enacted lady's postscript—he began to scrape among the stuff upon the floor. The point of his stick struck something hard and yellow which he took up idly, thinking that it was but a bit of the skull or other portion of the frame of a deceased Mycenian. As Mycenians, however, did not carve their skeletons, and as even in that light he could see that this object was carved, he continued his researches, to discover, lying just beneath the surface much disjointed by damp, the pieces of a splendid ivory casket. The method, extraordinarily ingenious, whereby he succeeded in removing all these fragments *in situ* and without injury, is too long to describe, even if I remembered its details. Suffice it to say that he poured plaster of Paris or some such composition over them, thereby

recovering them in such perfect condition that the experts at home have been able to rebuild this valuable casket exactly as it was when, thousands of years ago, some Mycenian placed it in the resting-place of a beloved relative. Doubtless it was that relative's most treasured possession.

In some respects these ancients must have been curiously unselfish. Few heirs of to-day would consent to objects of enormous value—such as pictures by Titian or gold cups by Benvenuto Cellini—being interred with the bones of the progenitor or testator who had cherished them during life. Yet in the early ages this was done continually. Thus, to take one example, I saw not long ago, I think in the Naples Museum, a drinking-vase that even in its own period must have been absolutely without price, which was discovered in the tomb of one of the Roman emperors. More, a screw or nail hole has been pierced rudely through the bottom of the vase, whether to destroy its value or to fasten it to the breast-plate or furnitures of the corpse, I cannot say. In Cyprus such instances are very common.

Close by St. Katherine's tomb stands that grove which among the inhabitants of this neighbourhood is known as the "accursed trees." Those trees nobody will touch, since to carry away any portion of them for burning or other purposes, is supposed to entail sudden and terrible disaster. Indeed it is said that one bold spirit who, being short of firewood, dared to fly in the face of tradition, suffered not long ago many horrible things in consequence of his crime. Of these trees it is reported also that they have never put out any leaves in spring or summer for uncounted generations, and yet neither rot or die. Also that no other trees of the sort are known in Cyprus, which I do not believe. Certainly at first sight their appearance is very curious, for they are spectral-looking and seem to be quite dead. On careful examination, however, I solved the mystery. It

is this, or so I think; the thorns grow upon very poor, shallow, and stony ground, perhaps over ruins. Nearly all their twigs are sere and brittle for they snap between the fingers, but if looked at closely it will be seen that upon the stems faint new growths can be found here and there, which at the period of our visit were just breaking into leaf like those of every other tree. Their vitality is sufficient to enable them to do this and no more, thereby saving them from actual decay. So much for the "accursed grove" and its attendant superstition.

All about this place among the ruins grow huge plants of fennel throwing up flower-stems six or eight feet high. With the roots of this herb is found a species of mushroom or fungus, which is much prized locally and considered very delicate eating. We saw a native searching for these mushrooms by the help of a long stick. As he wandered from bush to bush, his steadfast eyes fixed upon the ground, this man added a curiously lonesome and impressive note to that solemn and deserted landscape.

The walls of old Salamis, enclosing a great area of land, and even some of its gateways, can still be clearly traced. The sites of Amathus and Curium were desolate, but neither of them, to my fancy, so desolate as this, where not even a patch of barley is sown among the ruins that stretch on and on, tumbled heaps of stone, till they end in barren dunes, self-reclaimed from the sea, the place where flighting cranes pause to rest after their long journeys.

Since last I visited this dead city the Cyprus Exploration Fund has been at work here, revealing amongst other buried buildings the site of the great market, or forum, a vast place, at a guess six hundred yards or so in length by some two hundred broad. This mart was surrounded by columns of Egyptian granite; there they lie in every direction, shattered, doubtless, by the earthquake in the time of Constantine. What labour and money it must have cost to set them here. Along one

side of this public ground, which in its day must have been magnificent indeed, probably beneath the shelter of the colonnade, there seems to have been a row of shops, whereof some of the name or broken advertisement boards carved on marble in Greek letters are still lying here and there. Perhaps this was the Burlington Arcade of Salamis, but oh! where are the Arcadians?

It is wonderful, in a sense it is almost terrifying, to look at this empty stone-strewn plain with its tall yellow-flowered weeds, its solitary fungus-hunter, its prostrate colonnades; its mounds that once were walls, its depressions which once were gates, its few scattered sheep and goats hungrily seeking for pasture among the coarse growth that in every clime springs up where mankind has had his home; its choked harbour, and then to close our living, physical eyes and command those of the mind to look backward through the generations.

Behold the great glittering sea alive with galleys, the hollow port filled with rude trading vessels from the coasts of Italy, Syria, Greece, and Egypt. Look down from this high spot upon the thousands of flat, cemented roofs, pierced by narrow streets roughly paved and crowded with wayfarers and citizens standing or seated about their doors. Yonder, a mile away upon the hill beyond the harbour, stands a lovely building supported and surrounded with columns of white marble, between which appear statues, also of white marble. It is the temple of Venus, and those gaily-decked folk advancing to its portals are pilgrims to her shrine. Turn, and here and here and here are other temples dedicate to other gods, all dead to-day, dead as their worshippers. And this market at our feet, it hums like a hive of bees. There law-courts are sitting; see the robed pleaders, each surrounded by a little following of anxious, eager clients. There to the south on the paved place clear of buildings, except the marble shelters for the auctioneers, two sales are in progress, one of human

beings and one of beasts of burden. There again in the shadow of the colonnade is the provision mart where butlers, eunuchs, and housewives haggle loudly with peasants and fishermen. At yonder shop several young men of fashion and a white-robed woman or two with painted eyes inspect the marvellous necklace wrought by the noted jeweller named—ah! his name escapes us. He neglected to write it in his tomb whence last year Mr. Christian took this golden collar that the artist would not part with save at a price which none of those gallants or their loves could pay. Hark now to the shouting! Why do those gorgeously attired runners, followed by outriders clad in uncouth mail, push a way through the crowd beating them with their wands of office? The king—the king himself drives down the street to pass along the market towards that temple at its head, where he will make an offering because of the victory of his arms over certain enemies in the mountains. He is a splendid-looking figure, shining with gold and gems, but very sick and weary, for this king loves the rich Cyprian wine.

But such pictures are endless, let us leave them buried every one beneath the dust of ages. Our lamp is out, only the blank dull sheet is there; about us are ruins, sky and sea, with the fungus-pickers, the yellow-flowered weeds and the wandering sheep—no more.

What a sight must that have been when great Salamis fell at last, shaken down, hurled into the sea, sunk to the bowels of the earth beneath the awful sudden shock of earthquake. Those mighty columns shattered like rods of glass tell us something of the story, compared to which the burying of Pompeii under its cloak of flaming stone was but a trivial woe. But each reader must fashion it for himself. My version might not please him.

Not far away from the forum or market are baths. One can still see portions of their mosaic floor, polished by the feet of many thousand bathers, and the flues that

warmed the water. Further on is the site of the great reservoir with remains of the aqueduct that filled it. As one may still see to-day its waters must have been distributed along the streets by means of little marble channels at their sides, a poisonous practice that doubtless bred much sickness, since they were open to every contamination. It would be interesting to know what was the death-rate in these old places. I imagine that it would appal us.

The necropolis of Salamis, as Mr. Percy Christian informed me sadly, has never yet been discovered. He showed me, however, where he believed it to be, under certain drifted sand-heaps near the temple of Venus and the seashore, but outside the walls of the city. If so, there it will rest till the British Museum ransacks it, since private persons may dig no longer. Then what treasures will appear! The gathered wealth of forty or fifty generations of the citizens of one of the richest cities of the ancient world, or such portions of it as its owners took with them to their tombs—nothing less.

If only all the multitudes which once inhabited these walls could rise again before our eyes and in their company those of the other dead cities of Cyprus! The great Messaoria plain would be white with the sea of their faces and alive with the flash of their eyes. There would be no standing-room in Cyprus; the millions of them would overflow its shores and crowd the brow of ocean further than the sight could follow. What has become of them? Where can there be room for them—even for their ghosts? I suppose that we shall find out one day, but meanwhile the problem has a certain uncanny fascination. Perhaps the stock is really strictly limited and *we* are their ghosts. That would account for the great interest I found in Salamis, which most people, especially ladies, think a very dull place, duller even than Famagusta.

Perhaps the most interesting relic of all those at

Salamis is that ruin of the fane of Cypris which is set upon a hill. There is, however, not much to be seen except broken columns of the purest white marble, and here and there the fragments of statues. But the shape of the temple can still be traced; its situation, overlooking the sea upon a rising mount where grow asphodel, anemones, and other sky-blue flowers of whose name I am ignorant, is beautiful, and the sighs of a million lovers who worshipped Venus at this altar still seem to linger in the soft and fragrant air.

When we reached home again a lady, our fellow-guest, described to me the ceremony of a Turkish wedding to which she had been invited that afternoon. I will not set down its details second-hand, but the bride, she said, was a poor little child of eleven who had to be lifted up that the company might see her in her nuptial robes and ornaments. The husband, a grown man, is reported to be an idiot. It seems strange that such iniquities, upon which I forbear to comment further, can still happen under the shadow of the British flag.

This reminds me of another Turkish ceremony. On the day that we left Famagusta, at the conclusion of our visit, for Nicosia, we halted a while to breathe our horses in the village of Kouklia, where, by the way, there is a beautiful leaking aqueduct that is covered with maidenhair fern. While I was admiring the ferns and the water that dripped among them, a Turkish funeral advanced out of the village, which at a respectful distance we took the liberty of following to the burial-ground. The corpse, accompanied by a motley crowd of mourners, relatives, sight-seers, and children, was laid uncoffined upon a rough bier that looked like a large mortar-board, and hidden from sight beneath a shroud ornamented with red and green scarves. Upon arrival at the graveyard, an unkempt place, with stones innocent of the mason's hammer marking the head and foot of each grave and serving as stands for pumpkins to dry on in the sun,

the dead man was carried to a primitive bench or table made of two slabs set upright in the ground about seven feet apart, and a third laid on them crossways. Here, while a woman sitting on a little mound at a distance, set up a most wild and melancholy wail for the departed, a priest, I know not his proper appellation, stepping forward began to offer up prayers to which the audience made an occasional response. The brief service concluded, once more the body was lifted and borne round the cemetery to its grave, that seemed to be about three feet six inches in depth. Here it was robbed of its gay-coloured scarves, of which a little child took charge, and after a good deal of animated discussion, lowered into the hole in a sitting posture with the help of two linen bands that one of the company unwound from about his middle. Then while a sheet was held over the corpse, as I suppose to prevent its face from being seen, some of the mourners arranged planks and the top of an old door in the grave above it, perhaps to keep it from contact with the earth. At this point we were obliged to leave as the carriage waited, and I am therefore unable to say if there was any further ceremony before the soil was finally heaped over the mortal remains of this departed and, I trust, estimable Turk.

Then we drove on across a grey expanse relieved now and again with patches of rich green barley breaking into ear. On our right the rugged, towering points of the five-fingered mountain called Pentadactylon, stood out above the black clouds of a furious storm of wind and rain which overtook us. Still we struggled forward through its gloom, till at length the sun shone forth, and in the glow of evening we saw the walls, palms and minarets of the ancient and beautiful city of Nicosia.

CHAPTER XIII

NICOSIA AND KYRENIA

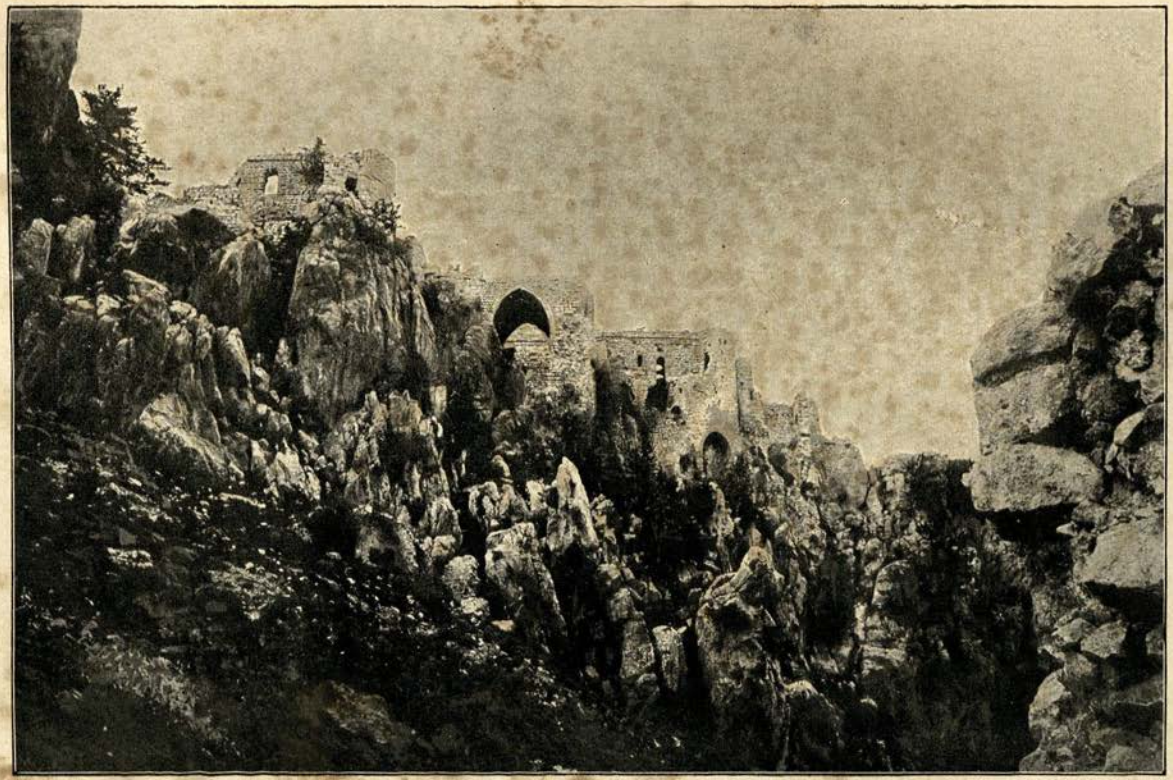
NICOSIA looks little changed since first I saw it many years ago. The trees that were planted in portions of the moat by the governor of that day, Sir Henry Bulwer, have grown into considerable timbers, though, by the way, those set upon the rocky soil round the wooden Government House have not flourished as I hoped they would. Also the narrow streets are somewhat cleaner and more wholesome, if any Eastern town where all household slops are thrown out into the gutters or gardens can be called wholesome; that is about all. No, not quite all, for sundry houses have arisen outside the new city, pretty dwellings with gardens round them, inhabited for the most part by officials, and the old Konak, or Turkish government office, after standing for some six hundred years, has been in great part pulled down, and is now a gaping ruin. This seems to me a very wanton and ill-judged act, for the building had many beauties which can never be seen again. Indeed on second thoughts the authorities appear to have shared this view, since when it was pressed upon them by some local antiquaries, they desisted from their destroying labours, leaving the unique gateway untouched, though, unless something is soon done to support it, not, I fear, for long. Now it is a sheltering place for wanderers, at least I found the blackest woman I ever saw, in bed there, who as I passed made earnest representations to me, in an unknown tongue, to what purpose I was unable to discover. It seemed odd to find so very black a person reposing

thus in the middle of the day beneath that draughty antique portal. Otherwise all is the same; even many of the government officers remain, like myself grown somewhat older, although death and migrations to a better post have removed several familiar faces.

I think it was on the day after our arrival that we started with our hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Hart Bennett, on a visit to Kyrenia, the beautiful little seaport which lies across the northern mountains. Our plan was to drive to the foot of these mountains and thence to ride on mule-back to the wonderful old castle of Hilarion, set high upon its almost inaccessible crags. We never got there, however, for the rain stopped us. In my case this did not so much matter, for I had visited the place before, but to my nephew it was a great disappointment. The country between Nicosia and the mountains is very curious and desolate. Here the strata seem to have been tilted on edge by some fearful convulsion in the beginnings of the world, so that more than anything else they resemble long lines of military trenches of brown earth lying behind each other in numberless succession, and topped, each of them, with a parapet of rock.

On arriving at the police-station near the foot of the mountains, we halted to lunch in the company of friends who had ridden out from Kyrenia. Our meeting-place should have been Hilarion, but as I have said the rain stayed us. To climb up into the bosom of that black cloud seemed too forbidding, and had we done so the castle is sheltered by no roof beneath which we could have picnicked.

Nobody seems to know who built Hilarion or who lived there. Mr. Alexander Drummond, writing in 1754, tells us that it is said to have been fortified by one of the Lusignan queens, Charlotta, who was obliged to shelter there when a usurper called James the Bastard, as I think, her half-brother, had been established on the



St. Hilarion

throne by the "Egyptian Power." Cesnola writes also that it was a stronghold of the Lusignans and used by them as a state prison. Lastly, I remember that when I was there in past years, a well-informed gentleman told me that it had once stood a siege and been captured, whereon three hundred persons, men, women, and children, were hurled from a particularly hideous height into a chasm of the mountains. I do not know if there is any foundation for this legend. At least the place, which still boasts some lovely windows and a huge cistern for the storage of soft water, is very wonderful, set as it is so high among those giddy peaks. With what infinite toil, cost, and pains must some old tyrant have reared its towers. Their style by the way is Gothic.

When the rain began to slacken I went for a walk, to look at a wood of young trees which some enterprising gentleman has planted here. They are doing well, and among them I was so fortunate as to find the bee orchis of our shores in flower. Also, as I think I have said upon a previous page, to my delight I observed that all the steep-flanked mountains round are becoming clothed again with forests of young fir.

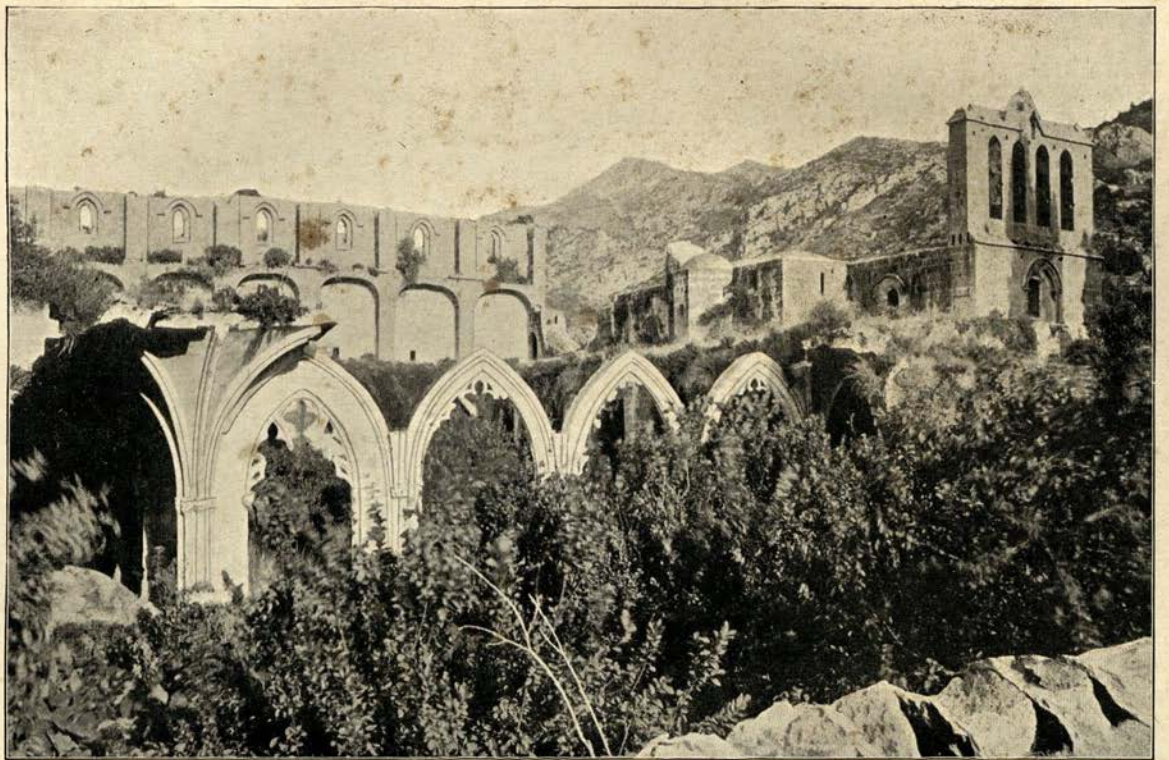
In the afternoon, the weather now being fine, we started for Kyrenia on the mules, some of us taking a rough ride across country to visit Bella Pais—or De la Paix as it is called by Cornelius van Bruyn, who wrote about 1693, and other authors—the old Lusignan abbey which stands in the village of Lapais, to my mind the most beautiful spot in all Cyprus. I am not, however, certain that it was an abbey. Drummond (1745) questions this, saying that he supposes it to have been "the grand *commanderie* of the island owned by one of the knightly orders." He finds corroboration of his view in the name Della Pays, derived, he says, from the Italian Della Paese, though how this proves that the building was a *commanderie* I am at a loss to understand. I confess, however, to a certain curiosity as to the true

designation of the ruin. De la Paix means, of the peace; de la Pays, of the country; Bella Pais, beautiful peace; Bella Paese, beautiful country. Whatever may have been the ancient form, the last and modern reading seems the most appropriate.

The building is as I remember it years ago, only somewhat more dilapidated. Certain cracks are wider, certain bits of wall have fallen, its end draws more near. This indeed must come within the next few generations unless the Government will find money to restore one of its most beautiful possessions. At present, as I assured myself by personal inquiry, it is not the will that is wanting, but the means. While the British Treasury grabs at every farthing of surplus revenue, Cyprus has no funds wherewith to preserve her ancient and mediæval monuments.

The place cannot have changed much during the last two centuries. Indeed van Bruyn's description of it might almost pass to-day. One thing that struck him, I remember struck me also. Talking of the underground chamber or crypt, he says "one might fancy it all built five or six years ago." Even now, over two hundred years later, the masonry is extraordinarily fresh. Also he speaks of a certain very tall cypress. I think that tree, a monster of its kind, is still standing, at least it stood fourteen years ago. Owing to the circumstances under which we left the abbey, on this visit I had no time to seek out its gracious towering shape.

It is difficult to describe such a building as Bella Pais, for to give a string of measurements and architectural details serves little—out of a guide-book. Much it owes to the wonderful charm of its situation. In the solemn old refectory, a beauteous chamber, leading I think to the reader's pulpit, is a little stair in the seaward wall, and at the head of this stair a window, and out of that window a view. If I were asked to state what is the most lovely prospect of all the thousands I have studied in different



MONASTERY OF BELLA PAIS

parts of the world, I think I should answer—That from the little window of the refectory of the Abbey of Bella Pais in Cyprus.

Around are mountains, below lie woods and olive groves and bright patches of green corn. Beyond is the blue silent sea, and across it, far away but clearly outlined, the half-explored peaks and precipices of Karamania. I said it was difficult to describe an ancient building, but who can describe a view which so many things combine to perfect that can scarcely be defined in thought, much less in words? The thousand colours of the Eastern day drawing down to night, the bending of the cypress tops against the sky, the slow flash of the heaving ocean in the level rays of sunset, the shadows on the mighty mountain tops, the solemnity of the grey olives, the dizzy fall of the precipice, the very birds of prey that soar about it—all these are parts of that entrancing whole. But what worker in words can fit them into their proper place and proportion, giving to each its value and no more?

In this refectory they show rings in the wall where Turks stabled their horses when they took the island; also many holes at one end caused, the old native custodian swore, with bullets fired in sport by British soldiers who were quartered here at the time of the occupation. I like to think, however, that the Turk is responsible for these also, and not Mr. Atkins.

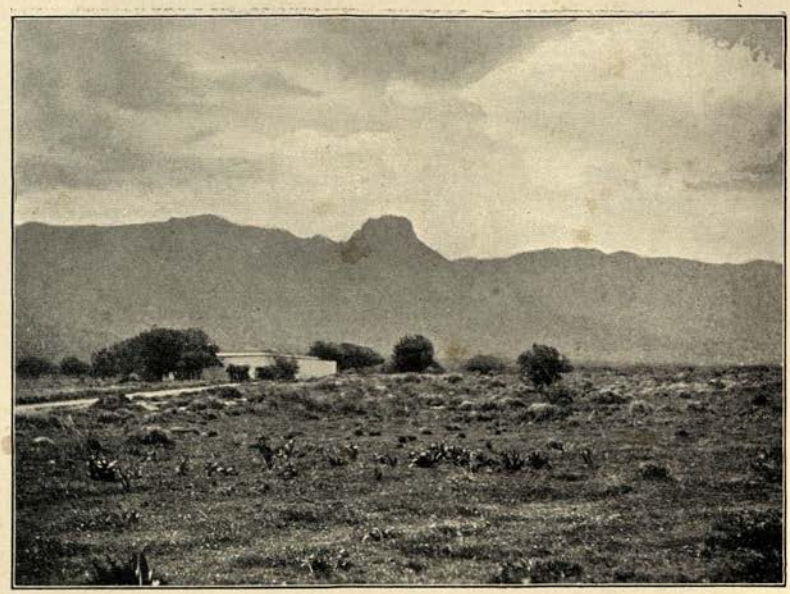
I went to look at the old chapel, not the building now used as a Greek church, which we also visited. This chapel is quite in ruins, and weeds grow rankly among the stones that doubtless hide the skeletons of the priests and Templars who once bent the knee upon them. The cloisters still remain with their charming pillared arcades and the marble sarcophagus of which all the old travellers talk. Now the quadrangle they enclose is a grove of oranges which have been planted since my last visit. In van Bruyn's day it was a garden, and

some other voyager a century or so later talks of it as a barley patch. Perhaps the Templars used it as a court set out with flower-beds and fountains.

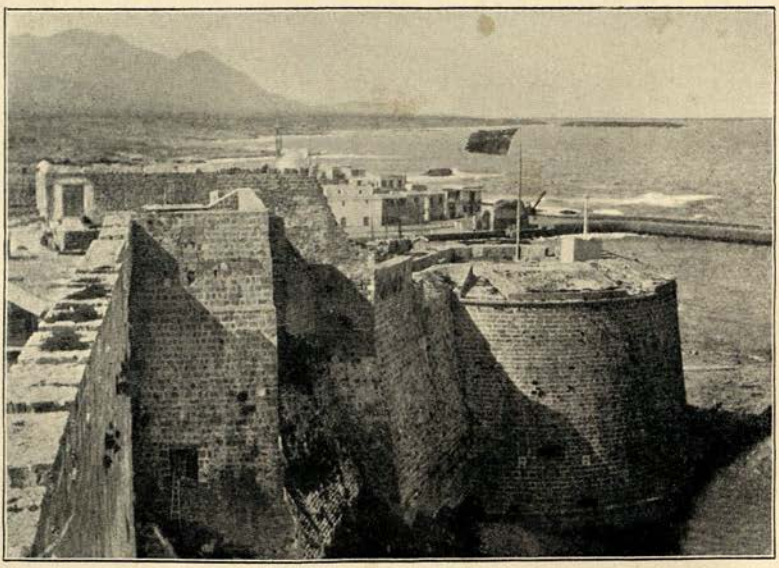
By the time that we had finished our inspection the rain set in again and night was near. For a while we waited under the shelter of the cloisters hoping that it would stop, but at length made up our minds to a soaking and started. We were not disappointed; it poured, and that is why in the gathering gloom I was unable to look out for my old friend the cypress tree. Moreover the road, or rather the track, was awful and my mule, a proud and high-stomached beast which had waxed fat on green barley, one of the laziest I ever rode. My belief is that he had been accustomed to carry baggage, not men, and baggage mules have their pace. At least being innocent of spurs I could not get him along, and to make matters worse, at every slippery or awkward place he stumbled out of sheer idleness, once very nearly falling in a mud-hole three feet deep. What between the mule, the rain, and the cold, it was, I confess, with joy that at last we dismounted at the door of our host Mr. Tyzer, the judge for the district of Kyrenia.

Before finally bidding farewell to Bella Pais there is one point which I will mention, in the hope that the matter may be looked into, that is, if I am not mistaken in my surmise. While riding through the village my companions and I observed the strangely unhealthy appearance of the children, indeed I am sure that several of these poor, hollow-eyed little creatures are, or were, not long for this world. Now as the site is so high and wholesome, I imagine that their ill looks must be accounted for in some other way. Perhaps the water is contaminated.

The sights at Kyrenia, now vastly improved from what it used to be, are the harbour and the old Venetian fortress. Also in former days there was a Phœnician rock-cut tomb with the skeleton of the occupant *in situ*



Heights of Hilarion



Venetian Fortress, Kyrenia
(Showing window of secret cell)

and all its trimmings, such as lamps and jars of earthenware. But of this I can find no trace to-day. Everybody except myself seems to have forgotten all about him. *Sic transit gloria—cadaveris.* There are still, however, plenty of these Phœnician tombs left in the neighbourhood.

The castle is a fine building of the same type and period as the Famagusta fortifications and those of Nicosia. According to Drummond (1750) "probably the whole work was repaired by Savorniani, who in the year 1525 demolished the old works of these places and re-fortified them." I do not know if he is correct and am, I confess, ignorant of the fame of Savorniani, although I think I have read somewhere that he was a noted military engineer of the period. Now the place is used as a jail, a fortunate circumstance, since it makes some care of the ancient fabric necessary. Here I would suggest that at very small expense the old chapel could be restored. This is the more desirable as no church exists for the convenience of English residents.

As at Limasol the view from the flat roof of this interesting fortress is very fine, commanding as it does the rugged heights capped by the grey towers of Hilarion, the fertile plain at their foot, and the opposing coast of Asia Minor. Immediately beneath lies the little harbour upon which the Government out of its scanty resources has spent several thousand pounds. To my mind the money might have been better expended elsewhere, since this haven is exposed to the fury of the northern gales, and notwithstanding its protecting moles no vessel of more than two hundred tons can enter it, even in calm weather.

The acting Commissioner, Mr. Ongley, pointed out to me, at the base of one of the round towers against which the sea washes, a little window that to within the last year or two has been walled up. Access was gained to it

by a ladder and the stones removed. Within, he said, was found a cell without visible communication with any other part of the castle, and in it the bones of a human being and those of a chicken. It is suggested that these remains belonged to some political prisoner, sent here, perhaps from Venice, to be walled up with the chicken. Of course under the circumstances he would eat the chicken, after which the rats ate him. I must add, however, that Major Chamberlayne, the Commissioner at Nicosia, who is perhaps the best authority in the island upon the mediæval history of Cyprus, and who actually opened this dungeon, throws doubts upon the story. Myself, I do not quite believe it, for a reason which he did not mention but that appears to me to have weight. I am convinced that upon such an occasion the starving captive would not have left those bones. He would have crunched them up and swallowed them. Perhaps some corpse of which it was necessary to be rid in a time of siege was entombed here. Who can say? At least that cell possesses considerable speculative interest.

This fortress has known the shock of war, although I do not think it offered any notable resistance to the Turks after the fall of Nicosia and Famagusta. Here, in 1465, Charlotta was besieged for a whole year by her brother, James the Bastard, when she seems to have surrendered the place and fled with her husband, Louis, to Savoy.

The coasts of Karamania, which are so clearly visible from Kyrenia and lie at a distance of about thirty miles, are not often visited by travellers, whose throats the inhabitants are apt to cut. They are reported to be a paradise for sportsmen, as ibex and other large game live upon the mountain ranges. For a sum of three shillings I purchased an enormous pair of the horns of one of these wild goats which had found their way across the straits. Ibex, I am told, have a habit when alarmed

of hurling themselves off precipices and landing unharmed upon their horns. In the course of some excursion of the sort the owner of my pair has snapped off the point of one of them. Nature, however, healed the fracture, but the symmetry of the horn is spoiled.

I did not enjoy this visit to Kyrenia so much as I expected, since, as is common in Cyprus, my wetting and chill on the previous day induced a touch of fever. It was mild, however, and yielded to a timely application of quinine.

So back across the mountains to Nicosia and—a Book-Tea—a form of festivity which has just reached the ancient home of Cypris. Myself, I confess, I could have spared it, since of all varieties of intellectual exercise this is the hardest that I know.

Nicosia is a place of many amusements. Thus they play golf there on a course of nine holes. It is odd to do the round with a gentleman in a fez acting as your caddie, and to observe upon the greens—or the yellows, for they are made of sand—Turkish ladies veiled in *yashmaks* engaged in the useful tasks of brushing and weeding. What in their secret hearts do those denizens of the harem think of us, I wonder? Would not their verdict, if we could get at it, be "Mad, mad, my masters"? But English folk would celebrate book-teas and play golf or any other accustomed game upon the brink of Styx. Perhaps that is why they remain a ruling race, for to do this it is necessary to preserve the habits and traditions of the fatherland, refusing persistently to allow them to be overwhelmed by those of any surrounding people. Witness the triumphant survival of the Hebrew. But that subject is large.

The scene on this golf-course was quaint and picturesque. In front appeared the bold outline of the Kyrenia hills with rugged old Pentadactylon's five fingers pointing to a flaming, stormy sky, and behind rose the palms and minarets of eastern-looking Nicosia. Be-

tween the two lay the wide plain across whose spaces from time to time wended strings of solemn camels, the head of each tied to the tail of its brother in front, or little groups of asses laden with firewood and other goods, a Cypriote seated on the last of them in a posture to be acquired only by centuries of inherited experience. The links themselves are by no means bad, though somewhat limited and extemporary. Thus the bunkers are formed of artificial banks varied by an occasional stone wall, the other hazards consisting chiefly of breaks of asphodel and rocks cropping through the apology for turf. Upon one of these rocks alas! I broke my host's best cleek.

I had long been looking forward to paying a second visit to the museum at Nicosia, which consisted in past years of a few disorderly rooms crowded with miscellaneous antiquities. Having before I left England read reviews of an important new catalogue of the Cyprus Museum, I concluded that all this was changed. The deeper proved my disappointment.

To begin with there is no custodian, so I was dependent on the kind offices of Major Chamberlayne to show me round. After long hammering we were let into the house by a girl, who said she would go upstairs and open the shutters of the rooms. On the ground floor beneath the archway, and in a kind of court, altars, remains of marble horses and chariots, tombstones, busts, unpacked crates of antiquities, some of them marked as having been forwarded years ago, were mixed in great confusion. The more precious objects were in a little chamber opening out of this archway, but it was no easy task to discover the keys which fitted the cases from which the trays had to be taken one by one and then replaced. The Cyprus share of the famous Enkomi treasures of which I have spoken we could not find anywhere. It appears indeed that these objects are still locked up in some Government safe. Throughout the

whole collection the story is the same. So far as the general public and Cyprus are concerned, it is practically valueless. For this sad state of affairs, however, the Government must not be blamed. They have not a single farthing to spend upon such things as relics of the island's past history, however important and interesting these may be.

In this Cyprus collection, to my astonishment I came face to face with an old friend. Many years ago, when first I visited Famagusta, I feloniously did steal a certain cannon-ball which lay about among the ruins just where three centuries ago it had fallen from some Turkish gun. The ladies of our party followed my evil example and stole another. Both of these mementoes we bore back to Government House and there, with the effrontery of hardened offenders, openly displayed them. Now it appeared that not long before a special Governmental edict had been issued against the removal of ancient cannon-balls, and it was pointed out that his Excellency could not suffer his own guests to do those very things which he had forbidden to the public. Bowing to the inevitable I thereupon surrendered my cannon-ball, but the ladies refusing to be influenced by this pure logic, managed to retain theirs, which they afterwards presented to me, so that at this moment I hold it in my hand.

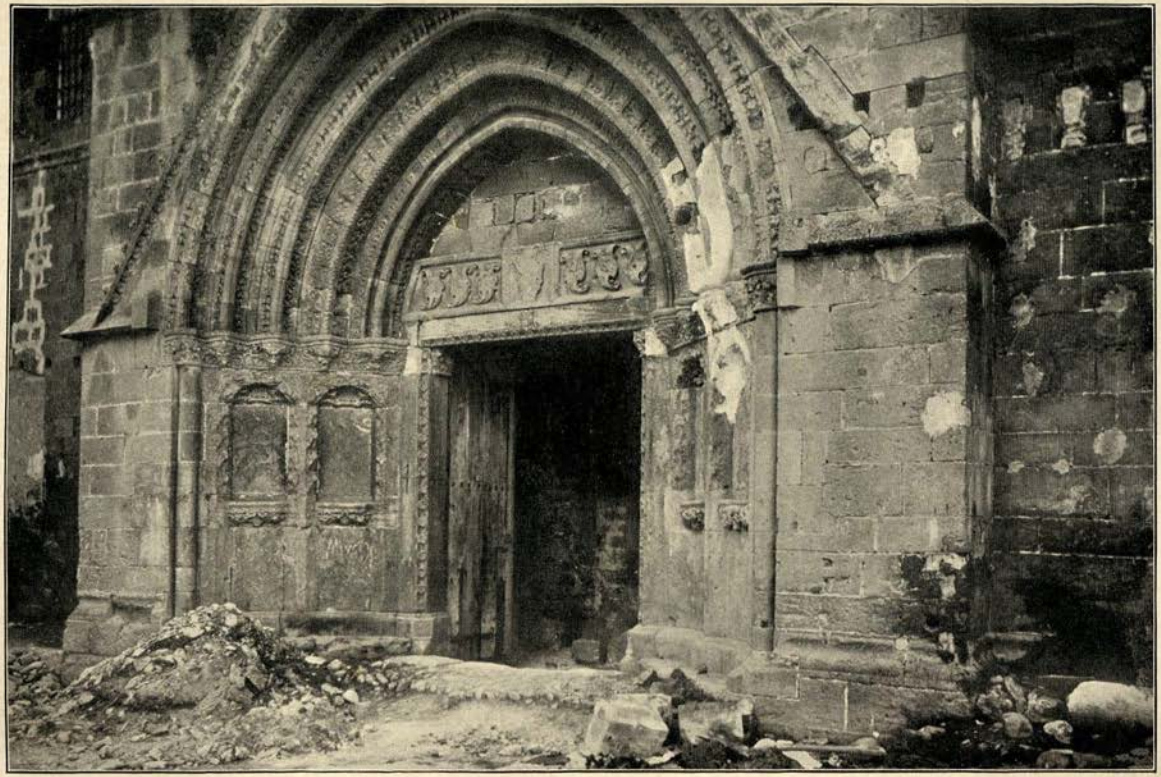
What became of that cannon-ball—mine, I mean—I often wondered, and on this day so long, long afterwards, I found out. There, yes, there neglected in a dusty corner on the floor, in company with the noseless head of a Greek child and the fragments of a Phœnician pot, unhonoured and uncared for, lay the heavy missile that with so much labour I had borne away from Famagusta. There was no doubt about it, I could swear to that lump of iron in any court of law; also it was the only one in the place, and evidently had been deposited here that the authorities might be rid of it. Moreover, by a strange coincidence the very gentleman whose official duty it had

been to relieve me of the stolen property in the first instance, was now at my side.

Life is full of coincidences. Who would have thought that the three of us, Major Chamberlayne, Cannon-ball, and I, would live to meet again thus strangely after so long a lapse of time and in so far off a land? Sorely, I admit, was my virtue tempted, for while my guide was mourning over something out of place in a distant corner, I might easily have transferred the ball to my coat pocket, trusting to fortune and the strength of the stitching to get it away, and unobserved. But so greatly has my moral character strengthened and improved during the last decade and a half, that actually I left it where it was, and where doubtless it will remain until some one throws it on to the museum rubbish heap.

The island of Cyprus is one of the few countries in the world that I have felt sorry to leave. Often I have thought that it would be a delightful place to live in, not in the towns, a frequenter of book-teas, but in solitude as a hermit upon some haunted hill among the shattered pillars of old cities, with vineyard slopes beneath and the sea beyond. Only I should like to be a rich hermit—to the poor that profession must be irksome—and then I would restore Bella Pais and see what the land could grow. A friend of mine did in fact turn anchorite in Cyprus, but I noticed that he always seemed to find it necessary to come home for his militia training, and when I re-visited his hermitage the other day, lo! it was desolate.

Fortunately the road from Nicosia to Limasol by which the traveller departs runs through the very dreariest districts of the island, and thereby eases the farewell. For three hours' journey, or more, on either side of it stretch bare, barren hills, worn to the grey bones, as it were, by the wash of thousands of years of rain and bleached in the fiery Cyprian sun. I daresay, however, that with care even the most unpromising of



DOOR OF ST. NICHOLAS, NICOSIA

(The Chapter-House of the Knights of St. John)

this soil would nourish certain sorts of trees, as probably it did in past ages.

Then the denudation would cease, the earth grow green, the flood waters be held up and the former and the latter rain called down, until here too, as on the Kyrenia coast, the land became a paradise.

And so farewell to Cyprus the bounteous and the beautiful.

CHAPTER XIV

BEYROUT, TYRE, AND SIDON

OUR journeyings in Cyprus finished, we sailed from Limasol at night. Next morning when I woke up early, our ship, a Messagerie boat, was already anchoring in the waters of St. George's Bay, and before us lay the busy city of Beyrout, the Berytus of the Phœnicians. Presently an emissary of the Beyrout branch of the house of Cook arrived on board and asked us if we had any revolvers, or cigarettes. We had both.

"Give them me," he said, "and I'll see you through."

Then it transpired that in this matter of revolvers there is little difference between the Turkish and the Cyprian governments. In a country where every peasant goes about his business with a double-barrelled gun slung across his shoulders, the respectable traveller may not pass a pocket-pistol through the customs.

We left the ship with our belongings and rowed to the landing-quay. Then the fun began. Such shouting, such gesticulating, such struggles! First, we were marched through a room where sat an aged Turk who stared at us sleepily. To him we protested that we had nothing, nothing! with such vigour that the least experienced might have guessed that we prevaricated. Then a minor Cook and his myrmidons hustled us through passages and gateways into the open street, and whispering mysteriously, "There is something wrong," left us and vanished.

In due course it transpired the "something" was that our sleepy-eyed Turk, who was by no means so simple

as he appeared, had caught sight of the large revolver projecting from between the folds of a coat gracefully arranged to hide it by the artifice of Cook. Further, he had impounded that revolver, but as Cook, with admirable promptitude and disregard of facts, informed him that we were sailing for Egypt in a day or two, he was so good as to promise that we could have it when we left. After this, thankful to escape so cheaply, we started for our hotel.

That afternoon I hired a carriage to drive out to a spot about ten miles away, called the Dog River, and by the ancient Greeks, *Lykos*, or Wolf River. Here, in the days of fable, a huge stone dog sat upon a rock and barked loudly whenever an enemy drew near. Perhaps —this is but a suggestion—the statue was so constructed that the wind rushing down his throat made a noise like to that of a hound which bays. At the least he did in truth sit there, since lying prone in shallow water I myself saw his gigantic, headless shape, large as that of an ox or a horse. Now he barks no longer, but whenever the sea rises its waves moan over him. Henry Maundrell saw him also in 1697, for he says:—

"In an hour or more, spent upon a very rugged way, close by the sea, we came to the river Lycus, called also, sometimes, Canis, and by the Turks, at this day, Nahr Kelp. It derives its name from an idol in the form of a dog or wolf, which was worshipped, and is said to have pronounced oracles, at this place. The image is pretended to be shown to strangers at this day, lying in the sea with its heels upward. I mean the body of it; for its oracular head is reported to have been broken off and carried to Venice, where (if fame be true) it may be seen at this day."

The first mile or so of our drive was through Beyrout, for the East, a very prosperous-looking town, where everybody seems busy at his trade—carpentering, copper-fashioning, weaving, or dyeing. Most of the inhabitants

are Christian, which accounts for this strange activity; at any rate, their women, some of them may be called pretty while young, go unveiled. The roads, however, are fearful; I have never seen worse out of Central America. In places, indeed, it was as much as two good horses could do to pull our carriage through the mud, while the holes into which the wheels dropped continually were deep and disconcerting.

So soon, however, as Beyrout was left behind these same roads suddenly became excellent—no civilised turnpike could be better. The change puzzled me greatly, but afterwards I discovered the reason. We had passed into territory over which the Mussulman rules in name alone. After the fearful massacre of the Christians at Damascus and elsewhere by the Druses, encouraged thereto by the Turks, came the French expedition of 1861. This display of force, backed by the remonstrances of the Powers, obliged the unwilling Sultan to grant semi-independence to the Maronites, and to allow the establishment of an *imperium in imperio*, generally known as the Lebanon Government. Being Christian, affiliated to the Roman Church indeed, although they retain certain special privileges, since their priests have the right to read Mass in Syriac and to marry, these Maronites are industrious and progressive. Hence the good roads, the honest administration, and the suggestive fact that property which lies within the territories of the Lebanon Government fetches, if sold, about five times as much as that of similar extent and character which has the advantage of bordering on Beyrout, but the disadvantage of groaning under the rule of the Moslem.

Every inch of the rich land that lines this road is in high cultivation, a large proportion of it being planted with mulberry-trees, which are kept severely cut back, as the young shoots of two or three years' standing produce the richest crop of leaves. These mulberries are not grown for their fruit but only for the foliage, that feeds

the silk-worms, which are perhaps the principal source of wealth in this district. Between these plantations lie patches of vines and other crops.

Here the road was crowded with transport animals; donkeys staggering along under the weight of two great planks; camels laden with mighty sacks of grain, and so forth. As we went I observed a farmer engaged in setting a number of young trees, to receive which the ground had been carefully trenched to a depth of over two feet. Finding it troublesome to throw up the soil from the bottom of the trench, labour doubtless being cheap in Syria, he overcame the difficulty in a very ingenious fashion. To the stem of his shovel were attached two thin ropes, each of them held by a man who stood upon the surface level. When the agriculturist below had piled the spade with earth, at a word the assistants above pulled, and, without any undue exertion on his part, up came the shovel and its contents. The plan is clever, yet it seemed to me somewhat wasteful to employ the muscles of three men to throw one spadeful of soil out of a hole not thirty inches deep. A Turk, however, would settle the question by planting the mulberries in untrenched land, or more probably by leaving them unplanted altogether.

For five or six miles our road ran on by the edge of the sea, till at length we reached our goal. Here a river or rather a wide torrent—that of the Dog—has in the course of unnumbered æons cut for itself a path to the ocean between two bold, bare-shouldered mountains. This stream is, or was, crossed by a fine stone bridge, but the winter floods, coming down in their fury, have undermined its piers and swept away several of the spans. At present no attempt has been made to repair the wreck.

Above us, to be reached by a few minutes' scramble, ran the remains of the old Roman, or mayhap Phœnician, road, cut in the face of the precipice. Here, graven deep

upon the flat surface of the rock, are curious tablets, each of which marks the passage of some conqueror at different periods of the world's history. Altogether there are about a dozen of these inscriptions. The latest in date records the names of the French generals who occupied the land so recently as 1860; the earliest that of the Egyptian Pharaoh, whose standards shone in the Syrian sun before Solomon sat upon the throne of Judah; the sign manual of great Rameses, no less, for whose pleasure the Israelites moulded their strawless bricks from the mud of Father Nile. The Assyrian was here also, Sennacherib the king who flourished when Rameses had been some seven centuries dead, and others great in their day, whereof nothing now remains except a name and such monuments as these. Each conqueror as he trod these shores thus stamped his seal upon their cliffs, so that men unborn might learn the prowess of his arms. It was a poor and primitive expedient to avoid the oblivion which dogs even those at whose high-sounding titles whole nations shook, yet not altogether ineffective. At least it brings their exploits home to the minds of some few travellers thousands of years after those who wrought them have mingled their dust with that of the peoples whom they slaughtered. Will our daily press and voluminous records do more, or as much, for the conquerors and conquests of to-day? When the world has rolled along the path of another three thousand years some traces of these tablets may still remain, and with them traditions of the men who set them there. But who will remember, let us say, the Boer war and the generals that fought its battles?

The flowers that sprang in the crevices of this old roadway were beautiful and various. Doubtless the legions of Rameses and of Sennacherib trod such beneath their feet. The frail lily of the field is more immortal than the mightiest conqueror of the world. It serves to weave his crown and to deck his feasts awhile, but the

last triumph is not to him, for in his dust it flourishes eternally.

That evening we went for a walk through the streets and suburbs of Beyrout, amusing ourselves by watching the children of the city flying kites in the strong wind, a pastime for which in Palestine they have a passion. These kites, which are beautifully made, and decorated with dozens of bright streamers, the lads manage with great skill, contriving even to make their playthings fight in the air. Also we examined the fishing-boats in process of construction upon the seashore. They are built roughly, but very strongly, the uprights and knees being fashioned of rudely-shaped pines. I imagine that the Phœnicians of thousands of years ago must have sailed the ocean in such vessels, if of somewhat larger tonnage.

Beyrout is a land of flowers. Already I saw Banksia roses and Bougainvilleas in bloom, with many other creeping plants upon the houses round which the new-come martins dipped and wheeled.

On returning to the hotel, a fairly comfortable place, whereof the dining-room was decorated with the boughs and cones of the cedar of Lebanon, now, I am sorry to learn, a scarce tree, we found the *cavass* from the British Consulate waiting with our *tezkerehs*. These are documents of identification which the traveller in Syria is required to fill in, giving a full account of his personal appearance, age, height, parentage, and the rest, after which they must receive the official stamp of his consul. It is a curious fact, showing how little customs change in the East, that sundry of the earlier pilgrims mention the necessity of providing themselves with similar descriptive certificates.

Thus Wilibald, who visited the Holy Land in A.D. 724, says, "Nobody is allowed to pass this place (Libanus) without letters of safe conduct, those who are without such letters are seized and sent to Tyre."

Again, the monk Bernard the Wise, who travelled in 867, about 140 years later than Wilibald, mentions that at Bari "we obtained from the Prince of the city, called the Sultan, the necessary arrangements for our journey with two letters of safe conduct, describing our persons and the objects of our journey, to the Prince of Alexandria and to the Prince of Babylonia." Further on he says that on entering cities in the Holy Land the pilgrims were never allowed to leave them until they had "received a paper or impression of a seal."

The same habit obtains to-day, where the tourist's *tezkereh* has to be produced and stamped by the officials of each town he visits.

I do not think, however, that the English consuls have been much troubled in this matter during the present year, when, either because of the war, or for some other reason, but very few of their compatriots have visited the Holy Land. Of Americans, however, there are a good many.

The news of the relief of Ladysmith reached Beyrout upon the first day of our visit. By the French element, which is important there, it was ill received, but the rest of the population, both Christian and Moslem, seemed pleased. Thus as I was reading the telegram which was pinned upon a wall, an old Turk clapped me on the shoulder, and, pointing to the cable, expressed his delight by pantomime. Indeed the individual Turk is generally a friend to the English, and a good fellow. Of the Pashas and the government so much cannot be said. The Maronites also appear to like us. When I was at the Dog River a young man, who could speak a little broken English, came up to me and asked for news of the war. I told him of the relief of Ladysmith, whereof I had already learned by private wire, at which tidings he seemed delighted. "Good people, English," he said, "good people! No make poor men soldiers." Evidently

my friend preferred the paths of peace, and in this country would have voted against conscription.

That evening the sunset was beautiful. The sight of its colours falling and fading while the twilight deepened over the swelling snows of Lebanon, was one which I shall not easily forget.

Beyrout is a city of which the stranger, without local interests, is apt to tire after the first few days. Indeed, when he has driven round by the American sĕminary, inspected the pigeon rocks, where there are no pigeons, and purchased lengths of camel-hair cloth, which English tailors afterwards find almost impossible to make up, there is really little left for him to do. Therefore I was not sorry when very early one morning we rose, paid our bills, and under the care of the fostering Cook, who, wonderful to relate, succeeded in recovering the revolver, embarked upon the khedivial steamer for Haifa, sixty or seventy miles away, whence we had arranged to commence our journey through the Holy Land. Fortunately the day was hot and fine, and Beyrout looked bright and beautiful in the rays of the morning sun as we steamed out of its harbour, although the Lebanon was half hidden in a haze.

The collection of passengers on board was one of the most motley that ever I saw. Forward were many pilgrims travelling to Mecca, of whom presently. Aft, standing or sitting on the quarter-deck, were a party of American maiden ladies; Levantines in fezes; Turkish officers in rather shabby uniform; a Maronite priest with a tall cap; and four Turkish women wrapped in black robes, and wearing various-coloured *yashmaks*. In the case of the youngest and best-looking of the quartet, this veil was of a perfectly diaphanous material; moreover she found it necessary to remove it from time to time in order to admire the view. The other ladies, who, to judge from their enormous size, must have been elderly, were more correct, and managed to study Lebanon

through their *yashmaks*. But if they veiled their faces they showed not the slightest objection to the display of limbs which the female sex elsewhere conspires to hide. Thus the very stoutest of the family, for doubtless they shared the same harem, by the simple act of crossing them, revealed to the knee and higher the most gigantic pair of yellow-stockinged legs that it ever was my lot to contemplate. There she sat and mused, and there we stood and marvelled. Indeed my nephew, graceless youth, actually fetched a camera and photographed them. But, will it be believed, the modest instrument refused to act! Out of all the plates brought home this one alone proved absolutely blank.

At the invitation of the commander, Captain Peck, I went to sit upon the bridge, a coign of vantage whence I could study the pilgrims on the decks below. Among them was a party wearing astrakan caps, pious travellers from far Afghanistan. They were accompanied by a servant and seemed much cleaner in person than their fellow-passengers. Next to these a man was engaged in chanting his prayers in a monotone, and another in reading the Koran, also aloud. Further on sat a poet or story-teller repeating rhymes or tales to an audience that listened with more or less attention. Perhaps he publishes in Kandahar. On the other side of the deck, in charge of an old woman, were several ladies of doubtful pasts, or presents—one of them almost good-looking—pilgrims, to what shrine I know not. Number three, tried by the motion of the vessel, rests her head upon the knees of number two, while number four smokes a *narghile*, and regards the follower of the Prophet at his devotions opposite, with an air of philosophical amusement. Cooking-pots, prayer-rugs, chatties of water, baskets of food and oranges, all crowded together amid the prostrate forms lying on the dirty deck, appropriately completed this various scene.

About midday we ran past green-sloped hills, broken

here and there by bays of yellow sand and stretches of orange gardens, where in bygone ages stood the altars of that Ashtoreth

> "whom the Phœnicians called
> Astarte, Queen of Heaven, with crescent horns;
> To whose bright image nightly by the moon
> Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs."

Round this bay, doubtless, once rose the ancient Sidon, or its suburbs, backed by a spur of Lebanon, and in the hills behind lies its desecrated necropolis. The town, now a place without trade and of little importance since the Druse Emir Fakh-reddin filled up the southern harbour, like most of the forts and principal edifices of the Phœnicians, was built upon a promontory faced by a little island. From the northern end of this island runs a ridge or reef, protecting the north harbour. Doubtless the existence of this natural breakwater influenced the Phœnicians in choosing the site of the town, which in the fulness of time became so great a city. The ancient inhabitants of Sidon "Queen of Ships" were famous for their knowledge of the stars and powers of navigation after sunset. Even to-day it is not difficult to imagine her long trading galleys stealing out through the gap in the reef at night on their difficult and dangerous journey to the daughter colony of Carthage, and thence to Spain, Italy, Gaul, and Britain.

Several sheiks clad in their picturesque Bedouin apparel boarded us here to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Among them was an old man evidently of high position, since those who came to bid him farewell kissed his hand and face with great respect and affection. At one o'clock he walked aft near to where I was sitting, spread a prayer-carpet, and began to sing and mutter his devotions, making many prostrations, and from time to time touching the deck with his forehead. Then he took up his beautiful rug, shook it, and departed, leaving the vacant space to be occupied by another devotee.

It was towards evening when Captain Peck, pointing to a spot which projected from a vast dim sweep of coast, said, "That is Tyre." Further, with a courtesy for which I hereby return him my thanks, he offered to take the vessel in as close as it was safe to do, that we might have a good view of this place of renown. I surveyed it with a curious and deep emotion. Behind the white houses lay long dusky-coloured hills, and as seen from that distance—although in fact it rises some miles to the south, for I imagine that this is the mountain marked upon the maps as Tell Habesh—immediately to its rear appeared a tumulus-like eminence. Beyond this again the coast-line trends out to a sharp chalk-cliffed headland, known as the White Cape.

Strangely dead and desolate in the fast-fading lights of a winter day, looked this fallen city backed by the far-off snows of Lebanon wrapping that barren and forsaken land in their gigantic winding-sheet. Lonesome, too, were the smooth dull sea whereon our own was the only sail and the monotonous shore upon which it broke. Behind the town, if so it can still be called, spreads a stretch of yellow sand. Once this was beneath the water, but Alexander the Great, when he besieged the city, built a causeway across the neck of sea out of the materials of the continental settlement known as Palætyrus, that thereby he might come at the island forts. This causeway was 60 feet wide by over 400 yards long; but since the conqueror's age the sands have drifted over it, so that now island and coast are joined, and the ancient harbours have silted up.

What a history has this place that in the beginning, as to-day, was called, not Tyre, but Sur, which means a rock. The Phœnicians built it, or perhaps a people who were before them; Hiram (the contemporary of Solomon) increased and adorned it, Shalmenezer, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, and Antigonus besieged and took it. Cleopatra received it as a gift from the princely

Anthony. St. Jerome celebrated it as the richest and most lovely city of Phœnicia and the East. The Saracens occupied it, the Crusaders drove them out and held it for generations. Lastly, the Moslems retook it, and to this hour stamped it with their seal of ruin. It is sung of also by Isaiah and Ezekiel, who prophesied its woe.

"Is this your joyous city whose antiquity is of ancient days?" Well may the traveller ask that question of "the crowned city whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth." In the old time, exalted by her pomp and wealth, Tyre said:—

"I am a god, I sit in the seat of God in the midst of the sea" and set her heart "as the heart of God." Therefore said the Lord God: "Behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causes his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God: and it shall become a spoil for the nations. . . . And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harp shall be no more heard. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord hath spoken it, saith the Lord God. Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus: Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee. . . . How art thou destroyed that wast inhabited of sea-faring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants. . . . !"

"A place for the spreading of nets!" Behold there on the rocks, where stood her forts and palaces, the nets lie spread, drying for the use of those humble fishermen, in whose veins runs the blood of the merchants who were princes, and the traffickers who were the honourable of the earth. What a town it must have been in those days of the gorgeous Tyrian purple, when the mercenaries of

Persia, and of Lud, and of Phut were in her army, when "Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making; they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral and agate." And what a place it is now when the curse of the Almighty is at work within its shattered walls.

The site of island Tyre, discrowned, dishonoured queen, fades into a low projection, a mere grey blot upon the eternal waters that once she ruled, and vanishes. Now before us lie the sands that Jesus trod, still shining yellow in the last low lights of evening. These were the sands also over which Paul passed when, after his sojourn in the city, the Spirit demanded of him "that he should not go up to Jerusalem." . . . "And they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed. . . ."

Then down fell the swift curtain of Eastern night, and presently, watching from the lofty bridge, I saw the red lamp of Acre abreast of us, and to our right the lamp of Carmel, and to the left and ahead of us the hundred lights of Haifa. So to Haifa we came at last over the sleeping seas and dropped anchor in her harbour. Presently boats rowed out to greet us, and in one of them the *cavass* of the Consulate which had thoughtfully been warned by wire of our arrival by Mr. Drummond Hay, the British consul at Beyrout.

He was a gorgeous-looking man that *cavass*. Tyre in all its glory could not have produced more splendid robes than those he wore, and calm command sat throned upon his reflective brow. I worship no dignity or pomp of place; the sound of titles does not move me greatly, who am content to be a humble unit floating with a million, million others down the great sea of Time towards the night of Time's oblivion, thankful that I am allowed to do my work and to earn my wage as

well or as ill as I am able, according to the lights and the powers that are given me. Yet most of us are children at heart, and—I confess my weakness—I could wish to occupy some position in the world which would officially entitle me to retain the services of one or two —nay, let the truth out—of a whole half-dozen of Syrian *cavasses*. There is something about these magnificent creatures and their glorious and appropriate garments that excites my fancy and its desires. I should like to walk to and fro guarded by such splendid servitors, to awake them from the solemn and majestic idleness wherein they spend their sunny days, saying to this one "Go," and watching him as he goeth, and to the other "Come," making sure that he cometh with speed. It would give me pleasure to despatch them to lead the wondering and awestruck traveller within my gates, even though I knew that presently, when I was out of sight, they would relieve the said traveller of a trifling fee to the value of five shillings, made, in the corresponding number of piastres, to seem a sum magnificent and worthy the acceptance of the great.

The particular representative of this privileged class whose mien and appearance moved me to these reflections, at once took us under his wing, and in the most open fashion added our revolvers to the collection of weapons of war which were bound about his middle. Well he knew, indeed, that no mere port official would dare to interfere with him; no, not if he brought ashore a Maxim gun, pretending that it was for purposes of personal defence. So wide was that sheltering wing of his in truth that it covered quite a number of American ladies, who wisely tacked themselves on to our party, thereby avoiding all trouble with the Turkish customs.

At the hotel we found our dragoman awaiting us. A first interview with a person so very important to the traveller's comfort during the time that he is in his

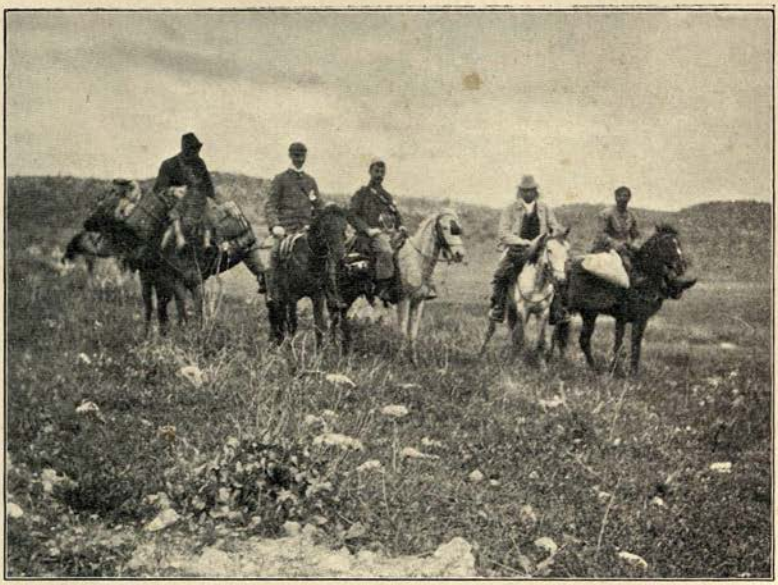
charge as a dragoman, is, in a small way, momentous, since on the mutual impression then produced a great deal may depend. On this occasion it was satisfactory.

The dragoman, David by name, was a Christian. Before he took to his present profession he had been a teacher in a school in Jerusalem, and after that, dresser to the British hospital at Tiberias, an occupation which he abandoned through inability to bear the smell of the anæsthetics that he was continually called upon to administer. Here it was that he learnt to speak English so well, a very necessary qualification for his present trade. For the rest, he was slight and dark, about thirty years of age, a teetotaller, and I should say of a somewhat melancholy temperament. Perhaps the task of conducting parties round the Holy Land for years on years induces depression even in the dragoman who profits by them.

With the help of David we settled finally upon our route. It was agreed that we should travel to Nazareth, from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee, from the Sea of Galilee to Mount Tabor, thence across the Plain of Esdraelon to Jenin and Nablus, and so round to Jerusalem, whence we proposed to visit Jericho and the Dead Sea.

In arranging such a tour many things have to be considered—horses, weight of baggage, possible accommodation, endurance of the travellers, the time at their disposal, and, above all, the weather and the condition of the roads, or what in Syria are called roads. These matters being at length determined after much discussion, we parted for the night, David adjuring us to be up early on the following morning.

So to bed, as old Pepys says. I for one was by no means sorry to get there.



OUR CAVALCADE

MARY'S WELL, NAZARETH

(*See p.* 209)

CHAPTER XV

NAZARETH AND TIBERIAS

On the following morning, after breakfast, which in hotels in the Holy Land consists of tea or coffee, two eggs, not much larger than those of bantams, and native jam, or honey from Lebanon, David arrived beautifully attired in a gold-laced garment, with a large revolver strapped on to him. He told us that the horses were come so we went out to look at them, and returned rather crestfallen. They were sorry brutes on which to ride for many days over rough and roadless country, although, like all entire horses, they held their heads well. In fact, the poor little animals, that under different treatment would have been serviceable, if second-class Arabs, had been starved and overworked. However, there were none others to be found. Haifa at any time is a bad place at which to obtain transport animals, but as it happened, the whole country had been swept of horses by a gigantic cheap American trip numbering over five hundred souls, with some of whom we were destined to become acquainted. Therefore our choice was that which tradition has ascribed to Mr. Hobson. It was these horses or none at all.

I was asked to choose mine, and, guided by my African experience of many years ago when I had a good deal to do with horses, I passed over the larger and stronger-looking brown animal and selected a little grey scaffolding of a nag. In this it seems that my judgment did not fail me, since the brown proved to be a veritable death-trap, and I was heartily glad when my

nephew rode it into Nazareth without a bad fall or broken limb. My steed proved quite safe and stumbled not at all. Indeed the front half of him was excellent—a pretty little head that champed the bit and even tried to run away, an arched neck, a good shoulder, and a pair of sound and sure-footed fore-legs. But once past the line of the girths, oh! what a falling off was there; indeed he had no quarters to speak of, so wasted were they, and this hind pair of legs were very, very weak. Indeed it was by no means uncommon for him to drop so sharply on one or the other of them for five or six successive steps that at the end of a day's journey my spine felt as though it had been twisted. Especially did this happen going up or down steep hills. David's pony was smaller, and even more thin, but had the merit of being sure-footed and an excellent walker, a wonderful advantage in such a country where five-sixths of the road must be covered at a foot pace. Then there were two baggage animals, a horse and a mule, the former ridden by the muleteer who owned all the beasts, and the latter by his black assistant, both of them perched atop of the great piles of luggage and equipment.

It was ten o'clock or so before the baggage was packed and loaded up and we had departed under a raking and deadly fire from the kodaks of the American ladies. Strange customers shall we appear in the photographic albums of Pa. and Ma. and Kansas, U.S.A., or whatever other states our kindly acquaintances may adorn.

Our road took us through the town of Haifa, once called Sycaminum. This place is beautifully situated upon the south shore of the Bay of Acre, but to-day more notable perhaps for the pleasant-looking houses of the German colony who dwell there—their very box-like primness delights the eye full fed with Syrian squalor—than for anything else. Having stopped to pay a short call upon the consul, where I saw my friend

the *cavass* looking quite civilian and domestic in his morning clothes, we cantered through the narrow streets on to the road to Nazareth.

This road is one of the few that exist in the Holy Land. Like the new pier at Haifa, which cost several thousand pounds, and is quite unserviceable, it was constructed for the especial use of the German Emperor on the occasion of his recent visit to Palestine. In fact his Majesty never used it as he abandoned the idea of a pilgrimage to Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee, preferring to toil along the coast to Jaffa and thence take the train to Jerusalem. When first completed, perhaps, it was a good road of a sort, but after two winters' rains it is—what may be imagined. Still carriages are dragged through its ruts and quagmires.

On our right as we rode out of Haifa rose Mount Carmel, where the prophets were hid by fifty in a cave, and on our left ran a piece of the railway to Damascus which somebody began and never finished. Travelling on we crossed the wide plain and the brook Kishon, where the prophets of Baal were brought down to be slaughtered, I suppose that its waters might take their accursed blood and bodies out to sea. This plain is very marshy and we found considerable difficulty in making our way through one of the mud-holes on the road; indeed the baggage animals had to go round up the side of a mountain. It was here that we met a number of mounted soldiers, sullen-looking, ill-clad fellows armed with rifles of a somewhat antiquated pattern. They were hastening into Haifa to attend the funeral of the Turkish governor, who had died suddenly during the night.

The slopes of the Carmel range above us were clothed with wild carobs which nobody takes the trouble to graft and turn to profit. In the deep kloofs of these mountains also many wild bears are to be found. Crossing Kishon we struggled against the wind that tore seawards along its

course, through a stretch of marsh starred with yellow lilies and purple orchis such as I find here in Norfolk, up that gorge whence Sisera is said to have advanced with his army before he met his death at the hands of the patriotic but treacherous Jael. At length, riding over park-like hills covered with beautiful oaks of a species that I do not know, just then breaking into green and tender leaf, we came to a spot commanding a view of the highest part of Carmel whither after the great drought Elijah sent his servant seven times to look across the ocean for signs of the coming rain. Below it and about three miles away on a lesser hill marked by a tree, is the very spot where took place the fearful conflict between the prophet and the priests of Baal, while beneath rolled the wide plain of Jezreel, dull and endless to the eye in the dense shadow of a rain-cloud.

On the top of a ridge we stopped to lunch among the ancient oaks. The provision of this or any other meal caused us no anxiety; we had nothing to do with the matter, being so to speak "taken in" at so much a head. The finding of food, and indeed of everything except wine and mineral waters, is the dragoman's affair under the contract, and he produces the same out of sundry bags which are tied upon the various animals. The liquor department, however, must be attended to by his principal. I mention the fact in the interest of any future traveller who may happen to read this book, for the matter is important. Water in Palestine is always doubtful, and frequently poisonous. To drink it may mean typhoid fever or dysentery. Therefore, it is most needful that there should be a proper supply of wine and Apollinaris, or, at least, of boiled water. The same thing applies in hotels. In whatever direction the tourist economises, let it not be in what he drinks.

The spot where we picnicked was lovely. Amidst those primeval oaks and the water-worn rocks cropping from the soil around us the ground was carpeted, in fact,

and not in name, with the most beauteous anemones, red and pure white in colour, that ever it was my lot to see, diversified on the more stony spots with clumps of flowering cyclamen. From all about, also, rose the curious chirping sound of grasshoppers, while above us, in the blue depths between the threatening clouds, hovered kites and falcons. To our right lay the road where, through the trees, strings of camels were passing, among them more soldiers hastening to the pasha's funeral, and unveiled women riding upon asses, or staggering along beneath titanic loads of firewood.

Presently, the restless David informed us that it was time to start. The horses, that had been tied to bushes without food to prevent them from rolling with their loads upon their backs, were bridled, and off we went along a fearful track of miles of mud sloughs (the German Emperor's new road), till at length we began to ascend the stony hills of Galilee. Sticking, floundering, and thrashing, we reached their crest, and far below us saw the village of Nazareth, a straggling Eastern township situated upon the lower slopes of rounded, rocky hills, which at this season of the year are literally sheeted with blue iris and with cyclamen.

Yes, there lay Nazareth, the holy spot, that like thousands of other pilgrims in every generation, for years I had desired to see. How is it possible for even the most cynical and faithless to look upon that place save with a heart of deepest reverence? Discard the war of sites, and that worse war of the quarrelling sects. Let the loud speech of arguing travellers pass from your ears, and remember only that this is Nazareth, the place where He lived who has influenced our world most profoundly of any of its sons. Surely we should consider it in this spirit, and in no other. Look, there in a hollow of the hills the ploughman drives his oxen; there the sower goes forth to sow; there a fig pushes its first leaves, showing that summer is nigh. Yonder

in the wayside shop, also, the carpenter plies his trade, and at our feet bloom the painted lilies of the field. Every stone of these mountains, from which on many a day Christ must have watched the dawn begin to burn upon the plains of Jezreel, every fertile fold of those valleys were familiar to His eyes. He loved them, we may be sure, as even we common men love the natural objects that present themselves about the home where we were bred, only, doubtless, more intensely, more purely, with a deeper insight and a truer imagination. As a lad, perhaps like yonder child, the Saviour herded sheep and goats among these starting rocks, to while away the time, plucking the cyclamen and iris, and watching the flocks of finches seek their food among the thistles. As a man He may have worked those ancient ploughlands, taking His share of the simple labours of the family to which He belonged. In short, within this circle that the sight commands, for thirty years or more the Almighty dwelt on earth, acquiring in an humble incarnation one side of that wisdom which has changed the world. Here is the master fact that makes this perhaps the most holy ground in the entire universe, and, in its face, what does it matter which was the exact site of the Annunciation or of the shop of Joseph?

Nazareth lies in a basin, and its white houses run up the slopes of the surrounding hills. The soil in the sheltered valleys must be fertile, since here are groves of figs and olives hedged with great fences of prickly pear. Probably, omitting certain modern buildings in western style, the appearance of the little town looked at from a distance is not dissimilar to that which it presented in the time of our Lord. At least, the country must be absolutely the same, even down to the very rocks which lie by the wayside. The population also, both in dress and person, perhaps may not have varied much, although some writers think that it has received

a strong dash of white blood, I cannot say upon what evidence. Certainly, however, I saw some children that were quite fair in colouring, but, as St. Antoninus, writing at the beginning of the seventh century, mentions the beauty of the women of Nazareth, it is obvious that this, at any rate, is not due to an admixture of the stock of the Crusaders. To this day that beauty is remarkable, for I observed it myself, and it was curious to reflect that among the people whom the traveller meets in Nazareth are, very possibly, some of the descendants of the brethren of the Lord removed from them only by the stepping-stones of fifty or sixty short human generations. This seems the more likely, as I cannot discover that the inhabitants of the township were ever slaughtered out wholesale, or carried away into captivity.

Many sites are shown in Nazareth, among them two of the actual spot of the Annunciation and a cave or cistern said to have been the Virgin's kitchen. Then there is the workshop of Joseph, the stone table upon which our Lord is reported to have eaten with His disciples both before and after the Resurrection, whereof, however, nothing was heard before the seventeenth century, and the synagogue where He taught, a small building no longer in the hands of the Jews. Of the authenticity of any of these relics or localities nothing is to be said, except that obviously they cannot all be right. Nothing except this—that here was the home of Mary, and here the Saviour lived for thirty years. What more can be needed?

One spot there is, however, that He must often have visited as child and man, for there is no other water in Nazareth — the spring called Mary's Well. This gushes out beneath an arch which, although ancient enough, has, I suppose, been built, or rebuilt, several times since the day of our Lord. Here in the morning and the evening come the women of Nazareth with their children to fetch the household supply of water in narrow-necked

earthenware pitchers or chatties, which they bear upon their heads. Some, I am sorry to say, are beginning to replace these ancient and graceful vessels with square-shaped paraffin tins. Evidently this spring is the favourite gossiping-ground of the community, for while the children play about outside, or upon the roof of the arch, their mothers and sisters wash their feet in the overflow waters, and chatter away to each other of the news or scandal of the hour. So it would always have been. Hither day by day Mary must have come bearing the empty pitcher balanced sideways upon her head and leading the infant Jesus by the hand. Here, too, in manhood, when weary with toil in the summer heat, Christ may often have sat at even and perhaps have taught those who lingered round the fountain.

This well lies on the outskirts of Nazareth, so that a few minutes' walk from it takes the visitor into the country. The flowers that I noticed here were anemones, ranunculi just showing for bloom, a variety of wild orchis with which I am unacquainted, cyclamen, blue iris (in sheets), asphodel, and, about a mile out of Nazareth, a single patch of English daisies. The birds in addition to the usual crows and falcons were the new-come swallows, the common sparrow that here seems to build in crannies of the walls, and the beautiful goldfinches of which I saw flocks numbering as many as thirty or fifty. I have never seen the goldfinch pack like this in England, perhaps because it is comparatively rare.

On arrival we found our inn crowded with a portion of the countless American company who had absorbed all the horses in Palestine and were now on the way back to Haifa where their vessel lay. Their conductor who, as I suppose, to make himself more easily visible to the items of his vast troop, was clad in flowing Eastern robes, a kindly and very agreeable member of the American nation, told us a moving tale which suggests that such a post is no sinecure. He took his flock, or some of it,

to inspect, I think, that ancient roll of the Samaritan law which is kept in the synagogue at Nablus. Here, when the *kohen* was not looking, one of them tore a corner off the manuscript. The theft was detected and complaint made. Thereupon my friend the conductor summoned the party and addressed them upon the iniquity of such an act in terms so moving that the conscience of the spoiler was worked upon with such effect that he restored the missing fragment.

"When, however," continued the conductor, "on the very next day I saw that same fellow sitting upon the capital of a fallen marble column and smashing the carvings off it with a hammer, well, sir, I assure you that I never felt more like knocking a man down in my life. And, sir, he was a minister!"

Let us hope, by the way, that it was the copy of the ancient Pentateuch, which is frequently shown to travellers as the original, that was mutilated by this pious person. Apropos of the above story an American lady told me at Jerusalem that she met the same party in Egypt and at one time saw a whole collection of them —I think she said eight or ten—seated upon the head of the sphinx and engaged, every one, in trying to knock fragments from it with stones. She added that she had never felt ashamed of her countrymen before.

This reminds me of a still more heinous story—I do not vouch for it—which in Cyprus I was told of a certain traveller. The traveller, a man of practical mind, visited a famous shrine where a holy lamp had been kept burning for five, and as some said, for seven hundred years. An ancient monk showed him the lamp. "Yes, noble Pilgrim," he said, "I have watched it for sixty years and the good father who was before me, he tended it for seventy-one, so that the everlasting flame has had but two guardians in a hundred and thirty years."

"And before that?" asked the traveller.

"Before that, noble Pilgrim? Ah! we do not know.

All we know, for the books show it, is that the everlasting flame has not been out for five hundred years; it is said indeed for eight hundred, but that is tradition. Here is a copy of the book—would his Excellency like to see it"—and the monk turned to reach down the volume.

"Never been out?" *Puff.* "Well," added the traveller reflectively, "any way I guess that it is out now!"

When this gentleman—I mean, not the practical traveller, but the manager of the American caravan—whose name I regret to say I cannot remember, heard of our plight about horses, most kindly he promised to send two of the best he had to meet us several days later on the top of Mount Tabor. The animals, he said, were engaged to return to Jerusalem, and might as well carry us there as not. So we parted, but alas! as shall be told in its place, though through no fault of his, we never saw those horses.

As no other steeds were obtainable we started for Tiberias on our own, my nephew changing his brown nag, however, which on three or four occasions had nearly fallen with him, for a wretched but sure-footed little rat of a baggage pony, that if not walking could only travel at a jerky trot. The muleteer who owned him declared that the brown horse was perfectly right, only a little stiff, and having strapped the luggage on to its back, proceeded to show his faith by mounting on the top. At the first mud-hole I heard a scuffle behind me, and, looking round, to my secret joy, saw the poor brute on its nose and his owner in the mire. After this he dismounted, and drove it through all bad places.

Passing up and over the long hill beyond Nazareth, we saw Saffuriyeh below us, which is the Sepphoris of Josephus, once the capital of Galilee, and, after the destruction of Jerusalem, the seat of the great Sanhedrim. Leaving this village on our left we rode across more steep hills to the valley of Kafr Kenna, which is believed to

be the Cana of that marriage feast where the water was turned to wine. Beneath us lay the mud-built hamlet, looking much as it must have done when our Lord walked down to it with His mother to be present at the wedding, and on the road thither the spring from which the water would have been drawn that was made wine. Here, as at Nazareth, we found a number of women and children engaged in carrying water from the well to the village.

Riding on between hedges of prickly pears we came to a Greek church, the traditional site of the miracle, although that is disputed by the Latins. Built into the walls of this church, which, when we entered it, was being used for the purposes of a school, were two stone measures, capable, I should say at a guess, of holding five or six gallons apiece. These are shown as some of the actual vessels that held the water which Christ turned into wine. Whether they are the same is more than doubtful, but at least they appear to be of the pattern and period, and have been exhibited for many generations.

Leaving Kenna we rode by execrable roads, towards what is alleged to be the Hill of the Beatitudes, where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, although, of course, there is a rival, and, to my mind, more probable site, in the neighbourhood of the ruins of Capernaum. This mountain, which is named Karn Hattin, is a lonely hill standing in a great plain remarkable for the extraordinary beauty and variety of its wild flowers. In places, especially under olives on old cultivated ground, the earth was one pink flush, produced by thousands of a small, many-headed bloom, with which I am not acquainted. Elsewhere it was quite blue with a gorgeous giant vetch, or lupin, that grows among springing corn, while everywhere appeared iris and anemones, many in this place of a magenta hue mixed among the commoner whites and scarlets. Probably, on account of its size, this lupin is, I find, not included in the delightful and

interesting little book, "Wild Flowers from Palestine," gathered and pressed by the Rev. Harvey Greene, B.D.

It was strange to look at that desolate and untenanted mountain, and reflect that here upon its slopes—for the question between this and the rival site a few miles away at Capernaum, is purely a matter of opinion—may have sat those multitudes to whom were spoken the words which will echo through the world for ever, concentrating as they do the whole body of the Christian law. I believe it is admitted that this immortal and transcendent sermon was preached in the spring-time, and whether or no its sentences were uttered among these rocks, certainly the flowers blooming in such profusion about the place seem to bring home to the mind with new force and vividness those sayings which begin: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." That other saying also, "Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not neither do they reap nor gather into barns," might well have been inspired by the sight of the flocks of storks which at this season visit the plains about Mount Tabor, and may perhaps have been wandering to and fro within sight of Jesus as He preached. The greatest genius that has adorned the world would naturally have pointed His morals with convincing similes taken from the life, animate and inanimate, which presented itself about Him and must therefore come home to the mind of every listener, however ignorant or obtuse. Indeed, in the case of either site, this reflection applies equally.

It was upon this flowery mead on July 4, 1187, that the great Saladin shattered the strength of the Crusaders. The Christians were fighting with the reputed true Cross itself set up to inspire them, around which, wrote Saladin, "the Franks flew like moths round light." Says the Mussulman writer: "It was then that the sons of Paradise and children of fire fought out their terrible quarrel; the arrows sounded in the air like the noisy flight of birds; the water of

swords, the blood of arrows spouted out from the bosom of the mêlée and covered the earth like the waters of rain."

The Christians were driven back upon the hill of Hattin, and there, victims to burning thirst and the swords of the Saracens, they perished by thousands. "I saw," writes the secretary of Saladin, "the hills, the plains, the valleys covered with their dead bodies; I saw their colours abandoned and soiled with blood and dust; I saw their heads struck off, their members dispersed, and their carcases piled up like stones."

Next day the Templar knights and those of St. John who still lived, were brought before the Sultan, and to each of the Emirs and doctors of the Law he gave his royal permission to butcher an unarmed Christian.

Such is the story of the fall of the Cross and the triumph of the Crescent at this battle of Hattin, sad enough reading even to the Christian of to-day.

Before we reached the mountain we met, trailing across the plain for a mile or over, some two hundred of that band of American travellers with whom we had become acquainted at Nazareth. They were all mounted, and, as we approached, certain of them greeted us with facetious cries of *Baksheesh*, stretching out their hands in imitation of Arab beggars. In those surroundings to my taste the joke seemed out of place.

Their gathering was motley, including, as I noticed, a good many ministers of different denominations. Its most striking feature, however, was afforded by the ladies of the party. Nearly all of these, even those who were provided with women's saddles, rode straddle-legged, after the fashion of men, a sight which I do not remember to have seen before except among peasants in the far North. The general effect struck me as inelegant and even unseemly. Their attire also was in some instances peculiar; thus, one young lady

was clothed in an ordinary skirt much rucked up, and a pair of enormous Syrian top-boots. Another, although the day was warm and dry, wore a shiny macintosh which also had ascended in obedience to natural laws. One fine-looking girl, however, sat her pony, a spirited Arab, like a centaur. I never saw any one with a closer or a better grip of a horse, and I imagine that wherever she came from she must have broken many a colt. But perhaps these criticisms are born of the merest prejudice. In every department of life it is nowadays easy to grow old-fashioned.

The Americans vanished and the reputed Mount of Beatitudes receded, till at length, riding to the top of a ridge, we saw far beneath us the blue lake of Galilee, sparkling in the sunlight and surrounded by its immense circle of green hills.

"Look," said the dragoman, David, pointing to a white speck on the north shore of the sea, "there is Capernaum!"

That—Capernaum, the great and flourishing city that was "exalted unto Heaven," that white dot—a monastery, as they say inhabited but by a single priest. And the others—Chorazin and Bethsaida? The same, a desolation. Not even a monastery here, nothing but stones and some Bedouin tents which at this distance we could not discern.

Then we began the descent. It reminded me of that which once I made to one of the most striking and desolate places in the world, the gloomy rift of Thing-Vellir, where a thousand years ago the aristocratic republic of Iceland held its stormy and blood-stained parliaments. Now, after a long scramble down steep slopes of turf, to cut corners in the abominable road, of a sudden the city came into view. Tiberias is a crowded town set upon the shores of the great lake, surrounded with a crumbling wall and commanded by a fort in the last stage of decadence. The very arch

beneath which we entered now consists of a single span of tottering stones. Indeed, it is marvellous that these have not long ago fallen upon the head of some unlucky passenger.

We went to our hostelry, a tidy place kept as usual by Germans, and off-saddled there. After refreshing ourselves with tea and oranges, of which after our long hot ride we stood much in need, we set out to explore Tiberias, the abode, according to the natives, of the King of all the Fleas.

Heavens! what a filthy place was that. The king of all the stenches must dwell there also. The bazaars are narrow and foul beyond conception; along some of them I could only pass with a handkerchief held before my face. Down the centre of these pestilential streets flow gutters full of every beastly refuse; there too sit and wander the population of Tiberias. As I had been informed that this city was for the most part occupied by Jews, I was curious to see them, thinking that upon their native soil we should find representatives of the race more or less as it was when it defied the Roman eagles. I was destined to disappointment. Here were no hawk-eyed, stern-faced men such as I had pictured. Here even was no Hebrew as we know him, strenuous, eager, healthy, and cosmopolitan.

Far different are those Jews, for the most part of Russian or Polish origin, who dwell in Tiberias. At a little distance in their dressing-gown-like robe it is not easy to say whether individuals are men or women. Indeed, even when studied face to face their aspect is singularly sexless. Their complexions are curiously pallid and unwholesome, while the hair of the men, often of a burning red, is arranged in two thin curls, which hang down oilily on either side of the forehead in front of the ears, like spare ringlets from the *chevelures* of our great-aunts. I asked David, who had dwelt among them for

years, what this curious-looking folk did for a living. He replied—

"Oh! they just sit about."

So far as I could learn this seems to describe the facts, but I understand that the means to sit about on are, for the most part, subscribed by charitable Hebrews in Europe and elsewhere. Many of the men are, however, engaged in a study of the Talmud, an occupation for which Tiberias is traditionally famous.

When I add that, whatever the season, they wear tall black hats and skin capes; that some of the female children look pretty, though not strong; and that the adults, or individuals among them, are not averse to driving a trade in doubtful antiquities, it is all that I have to say of the Jews of Tiberias and their noisome habitations.

First, David led us to a Greek monastery, in the yard of which stands a vaulted building used as a rubbish place, said to be part of that palace occupied by the Sanhedrim after it was driven from Sepphoris. Thence, passing down more dreadful alleys—what would happen if they got the plague in them?—we emerged to the south of the town and walked along the road which runs to the hot baths. Here, as the ruins that lie on every hand bear witness, was the site of Roman Tiberias, built by Herod just before the mission of our Lord. The Saviour seems, however, never to have entered it, perhaps because it was a purely foreign city. On the cave-pierced hill above, set there no doubt to catch the cool evening breezes, is said to have stood the palace of Herod, while jutting into the lake are the wrecks of ancient walls and towers. The road itself runs through some temple, for in its centre, worn to the level of the pathway, stands the base of a marble column, and all about are other such remains. Having inspected them, but stopping short of the hot springs, we returned to Tiberias. On this occasion we kept outside the

walls to avoid the smells, and were followed to our lodging by Jews who wished to buy the photographic camera and to sell us glass dug from the Roman tombs.

I omitted to state that in one of the bazaars I saw a man hawking sparrows. He offered them for sale by twos, each brace tied to a string. I worked out the price asked as well as I was able, and, comparing it with the value of money in our Lord's time, found that it was about equivalent to the Roman farthing that was paid for two, or the two farthings for five, a bird being thrown in, doubtless, to the customer who took the full number. Truly, such things change little in the East. Truly, also, the sight of them makes much clear to the mind which before it has failed to grasp. That is why a visit to the Holy Land is in itself an education to people who undertake it in the right spirit, and do not suffer themselves to be overwhelmed by discomforts and other annoyances. Without seeing the country itself there is much of the Old Testament which it is difficult to understand. The same may be said of the New, if in a less degree.

Thus, to take a very minor but still interesting illustration, the allusion in Matthew vi. to the "grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," always puzzled me, as I could not understand why grass should be used for the heating of ovens. Nor did commentaries help me much. Thus the International Teachers' Edition of the Bible, the best and most useful that I know, says that grass of the field as spoken of here "indicates all herbs of the field." In Cyprus and the Holy Land, however, I observed donkeys and women laden with great bundles of a grey prickly growth, the stalks of wild thyme, I believe, though of this I am not certain, and inquired its purpose. Then I learned that this growth is invariably used by the bakers to heat their ovens. It has the property of burning with a clear, hot flame, but without smoke, and

therefore leaves the interior of the oven, after the ashes have been drawn, clean and fit to receive the bread. Can any one doubt that this was the "grass of the field" that is "cast into the oven" to which the Saviour alluded, or that He drew His illustration from the still common sight of the passing women bearing it in bundles on their heads to be sold in the cities of the Lake?

BOAT ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

CHAPTER XVI

THE SEA OF GALILEE

AT night the Sea of Galilee is very beautiful. The crescent moon sinking to the horizon, the myriad stars reflected from the breast of the water, the soft distant line of the opposing hills — where of old dwelt the Gergezenes—the hush of the heavy air, the brooding calm broken only by barking pariah dogs; all these compose a picture and leave impressions that the mind cannot easily forget.

Tiberias is a hot town, so hot that, as the German hotel-keeper told me, it is impossible for many months of the year to sleep except upon the roof. Even now in the spring the thermometer must have stood at nearly eighty degrees in the shade, and the sun was so powerful that I was glad to wear a bath-towel as a puggaree. Also on the first night that we passed there we were favoured with another evidence of the genial nature of the climate. My bed was protected with gauze curtains, which I thought were drawn with care, but about two in the morning I awoke to find myself the centre of a kind of hive of mosquitoes. The next hour we employed in somewhat ineffective hunting and in doctoring the lumps with native brandy. If, as science has demonstrated of late, the bite of a common swamp mosquito conveys malarial fever, what disease ought to follow that of those members of the family which have been nurtured on the filth-heaps of Tiberias? I confess that having recently read a good deal about the subject, the problem quite alarmed me.

Leaving these possibilities aside, however, I never remember meeting mosquitoes more venomous, or that left larger lumps with a keener itch, than those of Tiberias, except, perhaps, some with which I made acquaintance on the rivers of Chiapas, in Central America.

When we rose on the following morning I was dismayed to find that although the wind was not really strong, the sea upon the lake was so considerable that it seemed doubtful whether we should be able to sail to the mouth of the Jordan. This is a voyage which the Tiberias boatmen absolutely refuse to make in bad or squally weather, knowing that now, as in the time of our Lord, it is easy to be drowned on the Lake of Galilee, where a very violent and dangerous sea gets up with extraordinary swiftness. However, at last our men made up their minds to try it, and off we started to that Greek monastery which we had visited on the previous afternoon, where the boat awaited us.

I was not quite prepared for what followed. Arriving at the landing-place we saw our boat pitching and rolling furiously about twenty yards from the beach, while between us and it, breakers, large enough to constitute a respectable sea upon the Norfolk coast, rushed shorewards in quick succession.

"Might I ask how——" I began, but before I got any further two stalwart Arabs, their garments tucked beneath their armpits, amid a chorus of frantic yells and objurgations from every one concerned, seized me, and, hoisting me most insecurely on to their shoulders, plunged into the foam. The moment was ill-chosen, for just then arrived a series of bigger waves than any that had gone before. We were brought to a standstill; we shook, we bowed, we rocked to and fro, while now my legs and now other portions of my frame dipped gently in the deep. I was certain that all was lost, and that presently, in company with those infernal boatmen, I should be wallowing at the bottom of the Sea of Galilee,

spoiling my watch and my temper. Suddenly they made a last despairing rush, however, the waves surging round their very necks, and reached the boat, into which I scrambled and rolled I know not how. Afterwards, profiting by my experience, which taught them how to sit and what to sit on, also by the fact that they were lighter weights, my nephew and David followed me on board, I regret to state without the ducking their loud-voiced mockery of my woes deserved. However, before another hour was gone by I had the laugh of both of them.

When all were aboard we began our journey, heading for the mouth of Jordan, which, at a guess, lies eight or nine miles away. As there was no wind that would serve us, furling the sail, we depended on our oars. The sea was very rough, quite as rough as I cared for in this small boat, although she was staunch and good, having been brought here from Beyrout for the especial comfort of the Emperor of Germany, who, as it chanced, never visited the place. The continual tossing soon proved too much for David, who collapsed into the bottom of the boat, and lay there—a very dilapidated dragoman. My nephew, who had been an oar at college, volunteered to assist in the arduous and continual labour of rowing, but, to the joy of the boatmen, about whose style he had been sarcastic, did not get on quite so well as he expected in those unaccustomed waters. The voyage was lonesome, for on all that great expanse of sea, once the home of fleets, I could see no other craft. Indeed, we were not sorry when at length the weather began to moderate, and occasional gusts of favouring wind enabled us to use our sail at times.

Still, the experience was interesting, for ploughing thus through the stormy waves it seemed easy to enter into the feelings of the Apostles—who also were heading for Capernaum—when about this spot they were struck at the fall of night by the squall that nearly swamped

them. What a sight must these waters have witnessed in that hour, when suddenly as they struggled forward, doing their best after the fashion of the skilled boatmen of the lake, to keep head on to those hissing seas, they perceived the Divine figure gliding over their crests towards them. And again in that hour when upon another occasion "the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep, and His disciples came to Him and woke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us: we perish.' And He saith unto them, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'" To read these passages, as it was my good fortune to do, while tossing tempestuously upon the lake of Galilee, the exact site of the occurrences they describe, and under circumstances not dissimilar in kind, although different in degree, is to learn much. So sluggish is our imagination that to appreciate such matters rightly and in full, actual experience of their like is necessary. Here that befell us.

After some hours of rowing the sea went down in the sudden fashion which is common upon Galilee, and by the help of a favouring draught of wind we came at last to where the muddy waters of Jordan run with turbulence into the lake, bringing down much *débris*, and raising large, backward-curling waves. For a little while we sailed up the river, studying the black camel-hair tents of the Bedouin encampment upon its banks, and the Arabs, men, women, and children, who loitered round them. Then we put about and rowed through perfectly calm water past the stony desolate site that now goes by the name of Tel Hûm, where it is believed the ancient city stood. At any rate here was an ancient city, though whether this was Capernaum or Bethsaida is a matter of dispute. My own theory, which I suggest with all humility, is that both Bethsaida by its side and Chorazin

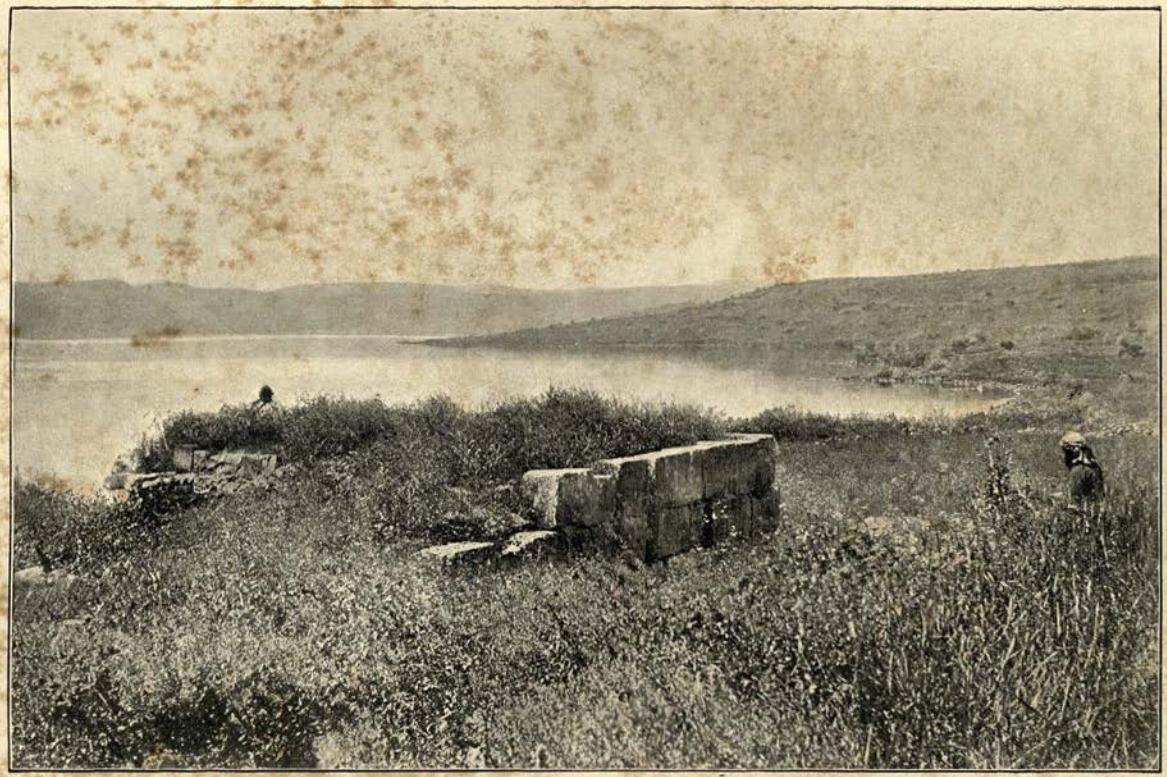


Photo: Frith

SITE OF CAPERNAUM

above, may in practice have been suburbs of the main town of Capernaum. At least it is certain that in the old days all this country, now an utter waste, was very densely populated, and it must have been difficult to know exactly where one city ended and the next began.

Passing the spot called Heptapegon, or Seven Springs, which many authorities believe to be the place of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand recorded by St. Mark, we reached the monastery of the German Catholic Palestine Society, and went to lunch in the hospice, a neat and cool building with a pleasant garden. After we had finished our meal we had the pleasure of being introduced to the reverend father in charge, who I think lives here alone. His name is Zephyrin Biever, a fine-looking man advanced in life, of courteous manners and high intelligence. He complained bitterly of the treatment which he had suffered at the hands of those tourists whom we met riding from Tiberias to Nazareth, saying that they came in scores, took possession of the hospice, and ate there without taking the trouble to call upon him or return him thanks, direct or indirect. Further he declared that they lay about on his furniture with their dirty boots, soiling it so much that he had been obliged to send all the covers to be washed. Indeed, the reverend gentleman was truly angered in the matter, and as it seemed to me not without some reason. It is a pity that travellers should show such a lack of consideration towards their hosts, as it makes difficulties for those who follow them. Father Biever stated that he would admit no more tourists of this stamp, but I hope that in time his charity may overcome his wrath.

Our host most kindly took us to inspect some ground, which, after great difficulty with the Turkish authorities, has been purchased by his Society. Following the line of an old aqueduct, that in places is cut through solid rock, we came to the remains of baths and to a

plain below upon the borders of the lake. This plain he believes to be the true site of Capernaum, quoting in support of his theory the fact that here met all the great caravan roads to Egypt, to Damascus, and to Akka. Another point in his favour is that this wide expanse of level land must have been a very suitable site for a city. Also here some city stood, as the foundation walls and other ruins prove; one, moreover, whereon has been fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus that it should be "brought down to hell," or Hades, according to the Revised Version, which may perhaps have been a figurative way of saying that its remains should be buried beneath the earth. Certain it is that neither here nor on the rival site do any of them remain above its surface. Most experts, however, seem to think that Capernaum lay a little to the eastward, nearer to the mouth of Jordan. The matter is one of purely academic interest, though naturally our host would wish to believe that the religious association to which he belongs possesses to-day the veritable spot of ground where our Lord lived and taught nineteen hundred years ago.

Father Biever showed us also what is said to be the site of Chorazin, now marked by a single tree growing on a hill above, and the plain where, according to the earliest traditions, after His resurrection the Saviour bade His disciples "to come and dine."

Here on this waterlogged swamp I found a tortoise basking in the sun after its winter sleep, and secured it, desiring to attempt the difficult experiment of bringing it home to England, a task which I achieved with many adventures. Indeed, not five minutes from this moment of writing, I saw that tortoise, which has now become quite tame, buried under the shelter of a carnation in my garden here in Norfolk. Poor Capernaum, for so is he named, does not entirely approve of our English climate, and at the first touch of cold or rain goes to ground in protest, until the air is dry and the sun shines

once more. Then he comes up, devours the young lettuces, and makes wild endeavours to start in a bee-line back to the Sea of Galilee. Although active under suitable climatic conditions, in appearance he is distinctly antique. I wonder how many generations have gone by since he began to crawl about the edge of the Sea of Tiberias. Even in this country individuals of the species have been known to live for several centuries, but no one has yet discovered what is the life period of a healthy tortoise in its native clime. Perhaps this one basked in the sun and slept in the shade when Herod the Fox built Tiberias in honour of his master, the Roman Emperor. It is at least conceivable.

Having bidden farewell to Father Biever and thanked him for his kindness, we reached our boat on the backs of Arabs, and went a-fishing by the bank where once the Apostles shot their nets. Stripping himself almost naked, the fisherman waded into the sea, and cleverly cast his net towards the boat. Then, following its line, he advanced till the water was up to his armpits, drawing in the net as he came. Presently in its meshes appeared a great fish, which he extracted and threw into the boat. Next he went back to the bank, walked along it a few paces, and repeated the performance. This time there were two fish, of a different species. To me the scene was intensely interesting since, I suppose that in much the same fashion, and near this very place, Simon Peter and Andrew, his brother, were "casting a net into the sea" when their Master, who was walking upon the shore, saw them, and called them to be "fishers of men."

After we had made an end of fishing we rowed towards Tiberias, past the coasts of Magdala, where Mary Magdalene was born. The evening was now lovely, and the sea calm as glass. Beautiful, also, were the reed-fringed banks among which hid water-fowl, and, still more beautiful, a great green and gold

halcyon that sat on the bending bough of an oleander, and at our approach fled away like a flash of coloured light. So by degrees we made our homeward course, the boatmen as they rowed singing a quaint and melodious love-chant, upon the old theme of an aged suitor who by successive gifts of ever-advancing value tries to persuade a young beauty to be his. From time to time, for the sun was still hot, they paused to refresh themselves with copious draughts of the lake water, drunk from out of an old meat-tin. This water the inhabitants of the district find healthy, but in strangers it induces dysentery.

On our way to the hotel after landing from this interesting expedition, one of the most interesting, indeed, that I ever made, we saw a curious sight. In front of the fort not far from the inn a mob of hideous Bedouin women with their children, rough camels that grumbled savagely, sheep, goats, and kids, one of which was being carried, advanced with a sullen air from the gates of the Turkish gaol. It appeared that a traveller—what traveller we never ascertained—had been robbed by Bedouins somewhere in the neighbourhood of Mount Tabor. Thereupon a party of soldiers surrounded the whole tribe concerned, and marched them into Tiberias. The men having been lodged in gaol—I wonder when they will get out again—the women and their belongings were being driven off into the wilderness to await the reappearance of their lords and masters. Justice as it is administered in Syria seems somewhat wholesale and indiscriminate, but of this particular example the European pilgrim is not likely to complain.

That evening we dined with Mr. Soutar, an able and experienced missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, which supports a hospital and mission station in Tiberias. The matron of this hospital was our fellow-guest, a refined and, if she will pardon its proclamation, a very beautiful Scottish lady. The destiny that appointed such a person

to tend and care for savage Bedouins and Tiberias Jews seems strange indeed.

Mr. Soutar, whose energy and good works are known throughout these coasts, told me many amusing stories of the difficulties which confront a missionary in Ottoman dominions. Thus: he is a great reader and has a good library, but the customs authorities of Palestine are prejudiced on the subject of books. They even seize "Baedeker's Guide" when they see it, and may perhaps treat the present work in the same fashion. Indeed Mr. Soutar finds it almost impossible to import the most inoffensive volumes except by the expensive method of registered parcel post, when they are sometimes delivered. On his arrival in Syria his library only escaped seizure because the officials, weary of examining luggage, passed the remainder, including his cases of books, on payment of a duty charge, which was assessed by weight. A brother missionary at Jerusalem, for whom he imported the "Encyclopædia Britannica," was not so fortunate, as that work was held to be revolutionary in tone and confiscated. Ultimately it was rescued by a third missionary, a man of business capacities, who paid *baksheesh* in the form of a fixed salary to a certain high officer. When next an instalment became due he intimated that before it could be touched the "Encyclopædia" must be handed over to his friend. It arrived that very night.

The Turkish custom-house has a particular aversion to maps, considering them doubtful and dangerous inventions of the Frank. One of the mission societies, not long ago, tried to import some charts of Judæa, as it was in the time of Solomon. They were impounded. Thereupon a missionary attended and explained that this map showed the country as it had been when the kings of Israel ruled. The Turk listened and answered impassively—

"Your words cannot be true, for in those days they drew no maps, and therefore cannot have made these.

For the rest, this land is ruled by the Sultan, and to speak of any other king who had dominion over it is treason. Let the picture writings be destroyed."

It seems to be the same with everything. Before any good work is carried out, a colossal ignorance and prejudice must be conquered. This can only be done in one way, by the scientific distribution of *baksheesh*. Thus, even to build a hospital necessitates a firman from the Sultan, and all dwellers in the East know the cost and infinite labour involved in procuring such a document. Nor must the officials, being what they are by blood, tradition, and upbringing, be too severely blamed, since, according to Mr. Soutar, they are all regularly discharged every two years, and by this simple method forced to repurchase their places at a great price. Sometimes, also, a decree is issued that they shall receive no pay for four months, and sometimes the post must support itself out of incidental and irregular profits; that is, by bribery and blackmail. With a family to feed, under such circumstances, most of us would become corrupt.

Turning to another subject, Mr. Soutar informed me that the Jews of Tiberias expect that their Messiah, a great and powerful king, will rise bodily out of the Sea of Galilee. I asked him also of his work, and he informed me that Jewish converts are very rare and much oppressed; indeed their existence is made almost unbearable. He quoted a case in which his own father and relatives had utterly disowned a man who became a Christian, refusing to know him when they met. Happily, however, after some incident which I forget, in this instance, a reconciliation was effected.

The matron also told me of her hospital, which, unfortunately, I was unable to visit, as we were leaving Tiberias early on the next morning. One of her chief difficulties lay in dealing with the Bedouins, a tribe which furnishes many patients. These people, until some desperate sickness brings them to the charitable Christian

doors, have very frequently never slept under a roof. From year to year they wander according to the immemorial custom of their people, resting beneath the stars in summer and crowding into their black camel-hair tents in winter. The result is that any building stifles them, especially at night. This I can quite understand, for as a young man I remember similar experiences when, after camping on the African veld for weeks, I first returned to civilised abodes. One of their patients, the matron said, absolutely refused to climb the stairs. When at length he was persuaded to the attempt he ascended them upon his hands and knees, scrambling along as we might do in crossing some terrible and precipitous place. These Arabs, however, are very thankful for the skill and kindness that is lavished on them; indeed those who are cured show their gratitude in many touching and simple ways. Nor is this sentiment lacking in the relatives to whom they tell their wondrous tale of the compassion of the Frank.

At length, much edified and instructed, we bade farewell to our kind hosts, with whom in their merciful work be all good fortune, and returned to the inn. Here we found the tortoise, as uncomfortable as any wild Bedouin in a hospital ward, engaged in waddling round and round the room with an activity surprising in a creature so ungainly. My subsequent mosquito-haunted dreams of him and of his far-reaching past are, I regret to say, too fantastic to be set down in a sober chronicle of facts.

On the following morning we departed from Tiberias for Tabor. The day was dull, and a coverlet of mist hid the broad surface of the lake, while above, patches of cloud hung upon the mountain foreboding wet. Reaching the higher level we rode over a plain, where in places the road, that, like everything else, had been prepared for the disappointing German Emperor, was actually ploughed up by industrious husbandmen, who grudged the few feet of ground it covered. Further on, however, the turf

became so sound and good that we could actually canter over it without fear of falling, a rare circumstance in Palestine.

On our way we met a procession of a hundred or more Russian Christians making a pilgrimage round the Holy Land. These people, collected from the vast interiors of the Russian Empire, land at Jaffa, and for the rest of that long journey trust to their legs. They walked with tall staves mounted in real or imitation silver, were clad in rough frieze, and carried kettles and packs, their only baggage, strung about their bodies. Nearly all of them seemed elderly, grey-bearded men, and women who were past the age of child-bearing, although here and there I noticed a young woman, perhaps unmarried or a widow. I believe that these persons, who if they be fanatical certainly deserve the respect of all right-thinking people, belong for the most part to the peasant class, and by many years of self-denial save up enough money, some £10 or £15 a head, to enable them to make the desired pilgrimage. The women are very plain and short in stature, but somehow their lack of favour is redeemed by the kindliness of their faces. Their husbands and brothers also are homely in appearance, but in this respect seem to improve with age, for both here and in other places I saw old men among them who might be called handsome. At least their white hair and earnest eyes gave them dignity. They appeared to be fond of flowers; at any rate we noticed that, notwithstanding their oppressive burdens, many of them carried bunches of anemones in their hands. Moreover, they had decorated the horses of their mounted guides with wreaths and coronals. As we went by they greeted us with courteous gestures, and in words which we could not understand. I could not help contrasting the conduct of these simple, pious folk with that of the troop of tourists whom we had met a few days before, and comparing their bows and gentle salutations with the hands outstretched in imita-

tion of Arab beggars and the jocose cries for *baksheesh*, which to my fancy, perhaps over-nice, amidst these hallowed scenes, seemed so strangely out of place.

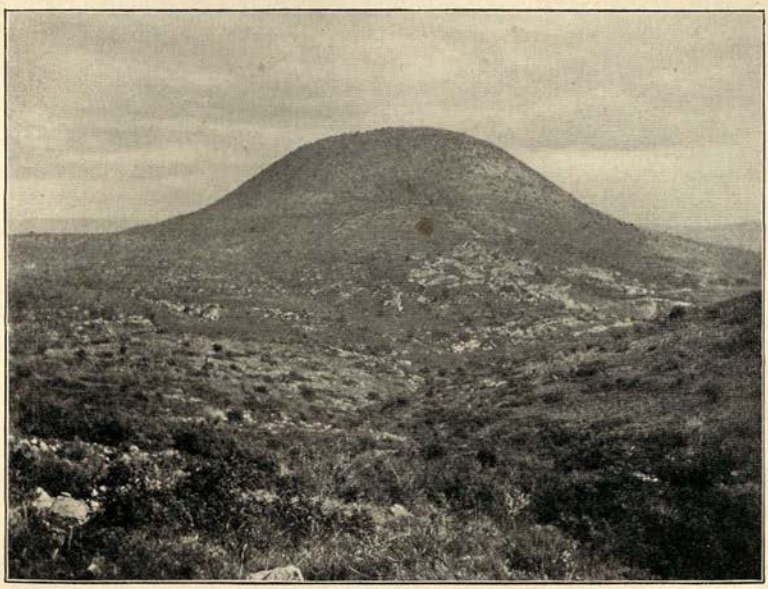
I have spoken before of the flowers of Palestine, but never in any other spot did I see their equal for loveliness and frequency. It is scarcely too much to say that here for whole miles it would have been difficult to throw a shilling at hazard without its falling on some beauteous bloom. Everywhere the turf was carpeted with them, in a pattern of glorious colours such as no man could design or execute. Over this starry plain wandered flocks of hundreds of storks. David drew his revolver and fired a shot, whereupon they rose like thunder, making the air white with their wings, to wheel round and round in circles and settle again far away. Where they nest I know not, if they do nest here. Perhaps they pass northward for this purpose. Perhaps even they are the fowls that I have seen building upon the roof-tops in Holland. Who can tell? I wonder, by the way, why these birds confine themselves to the other side of the Channel. There is little difference in climate between the Netherlands and the flats of eastern England, and to them a few more miles of sea would be no matter. Yet Nature says to them—Thus far shalt thou go and no further.

We halted to lunch in a most imposing ruin of vast extent, called Kahn-el-Tujar. This building is said to have been constructed in 1487, and was a caravanserai for the accommodation of merchants journeying to Damascus and elsewhere. All about are the remains of the chambers where they slept, with eating-halls and open courts, perhaps for the picketing of their camels and other beasts of burden. A quarter of a mile away on an opposing hill is another ruin, that of a Saracen castle, whose garrison, I suppose, protected—or plundered—the caravanserai. I do not know when these places were deserted or destroyed, but until recently a

fair was held here. Indeed it was the site of a cattle sale only two years ago.

Our meal finished we saddled up, and started somewhat hurriedly, hoping to reach the top of Tabor before the threatening rain came down in earnest. The mountain rose immediately above us, a round majestic mass, of old the landmark on the frontiers of Issachar and Zebulun. Here it was, too, that Deborah the prophetess commanded Barak to gather his host for the smiting of Sisera, saying, "Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun." Here also, according to the earliest and best Christian tradition, confirmed by Origen little more than two centuries after the birth of Christ, and St. Jerome, who wrote in the fourth century, but questioned by Baedeker and by the Rev. John Lightfoot, the Hebrew scholar, who died in 1675, took place the Transfiguration of the Saviour in the presence of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John. On this point, however, I shall have more to say.

The slopes of the holy mountain are thickly clothed with oaks, other trees, and various kinds of scrub. Strangely enough, Tabor has always been considered holy; by the early Jews, the Christians of all ages, the Saracens, and the people of Palestine of to-day. This reputation, moreover, is quite independent of the circumstance of the Transfiguration, except of course in the case of Christians. As we rode upwards we passed the tents of an encampment of Bedouins, who have the reputation of being among the most lawless of their turbulent race, but they did nothing more than stare at us. Scrambling along the steep zig-zag path, a ride of about an hour brought us to the summit of the mountain, which is said to be three kilometres in circumference. Passing beneath the ancient gateway we rode to the Latin monastery, known as Residence



Mount Tabor

Roman Catholic Convent with Ruins on Mount Tabor

de la Transfiguration, now in charge of the learned Père Barnabé, O.F.M., Missionaire Apostolique, and an assistant brother. The Father had not returned from some expedition when we arrived, but, upon presenting our introduction, his subordinate entertained us kindly.

We inquired at once for the fresh horses that our American friend had so generously promised to send to meet us here. Our chagrin may be imagined when we learned that these horses arrived on the previous day, but, as we were not there, had returned to Nazareth, or, for aught we knew, to Jerusalem. Indeed this was nothing short of a blow to us, since to attempt the journey across the plain of Esdraelon and the mountains beyond upon our weary crocks would be a bold undertaking. What made the disappointment more tiresome also, was the certainty that it had not been brought about by chance since, to our knowledge, the dragoman in charge of the horses had received strict and full orders from his employer as to when and where he was to meet us. Unfortunately, however, the American gentleman, in his forethought and generosity, had impressed upon us that we were to pay nothing for these horses, an injunction which, of course, we intended to disregard. Without doubt he had told the dragoman, or owner, the same thing, whereon that astute Eastern, not knowing our intentions, fulfilled the letter of the law, but broke its spirit. That is to say, he came to meet us, but on the wrong day, and forthwith vanished, so far as we are concerned, for ever.

CHAPTER XVII

TABOR, CARMEL, AND ACRE

LACKING other consolations in our sad circumstance, we took such comfort as we could from tea and the old saying about tears and spilt milk, after which we set out to see the ruins. Both that afternoon and for three hours on the following morning in the company of Father Barnabé, I examined these various and fascinating relics very closely. I do not, however, propose to attempt any detailed description of them; first because it would occupy too much space, and secondly, for the reason that this has already been done in a fashion which I could not hope to rival, by Father Barnabé himself, in his work *Le Mont Thabor* (J. Mersch, Paris).

These ruins, that are surrounded first by the remains of the encircling and ancient wall built by Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian of the Roman wars, which protected the whole top of the mountain, and, secondly, with the broken fortifications reared by the Saracens and destroyed by them also between 1211 and 1217, may for the present purpose be roughly divided into two parts, that lying to the west of the modern Latin monastery, and that which extends to the east. To the west, at the foot of the garden and beyond it, are caves which at some period probably served as tombs, but were afterwards, doubtless during the first few centuries of the Christian era, used as the habitations of hermits. In certain of these can still be seen benches hollowed in the rock, where year by year some long departed saint rested his weary bones, and other

little hollows outside, which the rain filled to serve him with drinking water.

It is strange to look at these wretched places and reflect upon the passionate prayers, the nightly vigils, the pious but in my view mistaken purposes that hallow them. What a life it must have been which the old devotees endured for decades in those damp holes. There is something pitiable in that tale of useless sacrifice. Yet in their way, how good they were, these men who deserted the real, if fleeting and uncertain, pleasures that the world has to offer to its sons, in order to wear out their lives thus, like lichens withering upon an inhospitable wall, till at length some brother anchorite found them stiff in their self-appointed tombs. When they were dead others took their places, and so at intervals of ten, or twenty, or fifty years, others and yet others till the custom perished, and its scant memorials writ in stone were covered with the dust of generations, in due season to be reopened and read by us to-day. God rest them all, poor men, whom the bitterness of life, the fear of death, and a hope of some ultimate transcendent remedy drove to such spiritual, and physical, expedients.

Beyond, or rather between, these hermit cells lies an ancient cemetery whereof Father Barnabé has excavated many of the graves. These are very curious, and, as he believes, contain the remains of some of the 50,000 people who took refuge here from the Romans in the time of Josephus. They are dug out to about the depth of six feet, and lined with rough stones, among which have been found a few fragments of skeletons and some coins of the Roman period. Another very curious relic is a sloping cement slab in what evidently has been a chamber with conveniences for the heating of water, which the Père Barnabé surmises—and after examination I agree with him—was used for the ceremonial washing of corpses before they were consigned to earth. What sights and sorrows must this place have seen.

Then there are what appear to have been wine-presses, with hollows at a lower level for the collection of the must, and great cemented cisterns where rain-water was, and is still, gathered, dating, it is thought, from the time of the Saracens. Beyond all these lie the wrecks of a Levitical settlement.

So much for the western side.

Passing through a kind of gateway to the east the visitor finds himself among whole acres of tumbled ruins. Here was the fortress built by the Benedictines during the twelfth century—I think that Saladin massacred them all. Here, too, were the monasteries of various orders, with their refectories, kitchens, sleeping-rooms, and baths built on the Turkish plan. One can even see where they warmed the water; indeed it is on record that the frequent use of this luxurious form of bath by these monks caused something of a scandal. Especially noticeable are the remains of a great and lofty hall, believed to have been the chapter-room of the Benedictines, and a chapel that I suppose belonged to this order, found to be floored with beautiful mosaic. This, however, has been covered up again to prevent the Russian pilgrims, who are very troublesome in such respects, from carrying it away piecemeal.

Many are the far mementoes of the past which I omit, as I despair of describing them in a clear and satisfactory fashion. Let us go on to the great basilica, first built by order of the Empress Helena, with its sister but inferior chapels on either side, supposed to have been dedicated to Moses and Elias. It is a long building with a round apse, which has been disinterred in recent years. At the eastern extremity of this apse stands an altar built up again of the rough original stones and surmounted by a plain, iron cross. This altar, placed upon the extreme verge of the mountain, is by immemorial report believed to mark the spot where our Saviour stood during the occurrence of the ineffable event of the Trans-

figuration. Who can look at it unmoved? Anciently it was roofed in, now in its simple loneliness it stands open to the heavens, and thus, to my mind, gains in dignity and suggestiveness. The tendency in the Holy Land is to cover every sacred site with some tawdry dome. I prefer the infinite arc of the skies, and for decoration the wild flowers and creeping ferns and grasses which grow amid the mouldering stones. Once the southern walls of this basilica were heaped with Saracenic towers and fortifications. Now it and these have come to an equal ruin.

At the fall of night, through the midst of torrential rain driven in sheets by a violent gale of wind, I went out and stood alone upon the broken wall of one of these ancient towers, till darkness overtook me, and the gusts became so fierce that on that narrow, perilous place, I grew afraid to match my strength against their fury. Beneath me stretched the vast plain of Esdraelon looking extraordinarily grand and gloomy in the dull lights of that rushing storm. There to the right was the territory of Zebulun; to the left the land of Issachar; behind the country of Naphtali; yonder soared the point of little Hermon, and beyond all rose the crest of Mount Gilboa. Suddenly revealed in swift glimpses to be as suddenly lost to sight, it was indeed a majestic prospect, but nothing there moved me so much as that desolate altar and the iron cross which stood in the dim apse beneath. It would be hard for any man to set down the thoughts that strike him in such a scene and hour. I will not attempt the task further than to say that this one lonely experience repaid me for all the toil and difficulties of my visit to Syria.

Two falcons were nesting, or preparing to nest, among the stones of the tower. My advent disturbed them. With wild screams they swept around me, and the presence of these creatures seemed as it were to complete,

even to accentuate, the solemn conditions of the place, as the great eagles that always hover about the crest of Tabor complete and accentuate its storied and eternal solitude. If ever there was a spot where God in His power might manifest Himself upon an earth He loved, and was pleased to redeem, surely this one is fitting. So at least I thought, who was happy in the occasion and circumstances of my visit. Seen in the glare of day, and crowded with hundreds of Russian pilgrims, perhaps it would have impressed me differently.

That evening also we went to the Greek church and monastery, lying on the north of the plateau. Some of the buildings here are very ancient, and include gigantic mediæval cisterns. Baedeker states that the Greeks claim to possess the actual spot of the Transfiguration, but in this I think he must be mistaken. At any rate, when I questioned the monks, they denied any such pretensions. The spot of the Transfiguration, they told me, was where it is shown in the ground of the Latins; they only own the ancient churches built, as they said, in honour of Moses and Elias.

On returning to the hospice we found that the Père Barnabé had arrived and were introduced to him. He is a missionary priest of the best and most elevated stamp, one of those men, to be found among the votaries of every creed, from whom goodness and charity seem to flow. Before he was sent to Tabor he followed his sacred profession for many years in China and elsewhere, and being gifted with an intellect capable of drawing profit from the many experiences of a varied life, as I soon discovered, he has made the most of his opportunities for observation.

We came to Mount Tabor prepared to rough it, whereas the dinner served to us in the hospice was, I think, about the best we ate in Palestine. It only lacked one thing, the society of our host, but I imagine it to be

against the rules of the order that he should eat with his guests, especially in Lent. After our meal the Père Barnabé joined us, however, and we spent the next three hours discussing in French and English Tabor and all that has to do therewith. The mountain, by the way, is still ravaged by hyenas, of which an enormous stuffed specimen is set upon the walls of the refectory. Indeed one of the fierce watch-dogs that are kept in the yard is partly paralysed by a bite in the back from the iron jaws of this ravening beast.

Most of our conversation, however, turned upon the identity of the mountain with the place of the Transfiguration of our Lord, to prove which the Père Barnabé has written his book, *Le Mont Thabor*. Against this identity various arguments have been urged, but the principal of them—indeed, to my mind, the only one which seems to have much weight—is that advanced by Baedeker, that the Transfiguration could scarcely have taken place on Tabor, "as the top was covered with houses in the time of Christ." To this Father Barnabé answers, and proves what he says, that at the epoch of our Lord there was no town on the crest of Tabor. This, indeed, seems to be self-evident, seeing that to the present day the only water-supply is obtained from cisterns, which do not appear to be of very ancient construction.

Moreover, there is evidence on the point, that of Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, Book IV. chap. i.). Speaking of Mount Tabor he says: "Now, Josephus erected this so long a wall in forty days' time, and furnished it with other materials and with water from below for the inhabitants only used rain water; as, therefore, there was a great number of people gotten together on this mountain, Vespasian sent Placidus with 600 horsemen thither." Afterwards he tells how "their water failed them, and so they delivered up the mountain and themselves to Placidus." Note, "the mountain," not the city.

Here is what Father Barnabé says upon the point of Baedeker's remarks:—

"L'auteur de cet article n'indique pas la source où il a puisé ce detail *et nous le défions de la faire.*

"En temps de guerre, le Thabor était souvent un lieu de refuge pour les habitants de la plaine et un camp naturel pour les gens armés. Mais, comme nous l'avons vu dans les premiers chapitres de cet ouvrage, il n'y eut jamais de ville sur le sommet du Thabor et personne ne pourra prouver qu'il y ait eu des habitants au temps de Notre Seigneur. Olympiodore dit expressément que 'le Thabor était désert avant le venue du Christ.'

"Mais admettons pour un instant qu'il y eut des maisons sur le Thabor au temps du Christ. Comment prouverait-on que sur cet immense dôme couvert d'arbres, Jésus n'aurait pas pu trouver un endroit pour prier et se transfigurer devant trois de ses disciples sans être vu? Nous ajoutons que, même dans cette hypothèse, la Transfiguration pouvait avoir lieu à l'extremité orientale du plateau, où fut élevé la première église et où une tradition secondaire localise la scène de ce glorieux événement. Du centre du plateau au mur d'enceinte de Flavius Joséphe, vers l'occident, on voit beaucoup de ruines d'anciennes maisons, de construction assez miserable.

"Au centre du plateau on a découvert, il y a deux ans, un antique petit cimetière dont les tombes ont été violées au temps des croisades. A l'orient de ce cimetière on a trouvé plusieurs grottes sépulcrales. Dans l'hypothèse que ce cimetière et ces maisons aient été antérieurs à Flavius Joséphe, il est certain que les habitations ne dépassaient pas le cimetière du côté de l'orient, parce-qu'il était absolument défendu aux Juifs d'avoir des tombes au milieu de leurs habitations.

"La partie orientale du plateau ne pouvait pas être couverte de maisons, si maisons il y avait au temps de Notre Seigneur. Or, depuis le cimetière jusqu'à l'église construite anciennement sur l'endroit traditionnel de la Transfiguration, la distance est beaucoup plus grande que celle de Gethsémani à la ville de Jérusalem. Personne n'ignore que Jésus s'est réfugié dans ce jardin pour prier, pendant qu'on le cherchait pour le crucifier.

"Quelque hypothèse qu'on imagine, on ne prouvera jamais que le Sauveur n'ait pas pu se transfigurer sur le Thabor."

Let us turn for a moment to the evidence in favour of Tabor. First, there is the apocryphal gospel of the twelve apostles, which is also known as "The Gospel according to the Hebrews." Into the merits or demerits of that strange work, which seems to have been written towards the end of the first century of our era, this is not the place to enter. The only point with which we need concern ourselves is that the writer, or writers, who probably began to live within fifty years of the date of the Crucifixion, connected Tabor with the Saviour. In chapter xvii. v. 1, Jesus is made to say, "Now, my mother, the Holy Spirit, seized me by a lock of my hair, and carried me on to the mountain of Great Tabor."

Origen states positively that "Tabor is the mountain in Galilee on which Christ was transfigured." St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who lived in the fourth century, says, "They were witnesses of the transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount Tabor." St. Jerome says of St. Paula, "She scaled the Mount Tabor whereon the Lord was transfigured."

I might quote other authorities, but perhaps I have said enough on the matter. I will only add, therefore, that after visiting the place, hearing Father Barnabé's learned discourses, and reading his able and excellent book, for my part I am convinced that he is right, and not Baedeker; that here and nowhere else happened the divine occurrence which is recorded in the Gospels.

When we rose the next morning it was to find to our dismay that it had been pouring with rain all night, and that more wet threatened. Under ordinary circumstances this would have mattered little, but with the plain of Esdraelon to cross the affair was different. On these flats in dry weather riding is easy enough, but after prolonged rain whole stretches of them are turned into sloughs of despond, through the worst of which a horse can scarcely pass. The lot of the traveller who

finds himself foundered in these mud-holes and benighted on that inhospitable plain, or forced to take refuge in some filthy, vermin-haunted native habitation, is not by any means agreeable. With fresh, strong horses much may be ventured, but the condition of our poor animals has already been described, and we had been disappointed of our remounts. The question was—dared we attempt to force them through several days' journey over swamps and mountains? When asked Father Barnabé shook his head, while David was downright despondent.

"Of course," he said sadly, "for me it does not matter; I can take off my clothes and wade in the mud, but what I am wondering is how you gentlemen will like that?"

As his opinion was evidently very strong against our making the attempt upon such wretched horses, in the end, to our great disappointment, we were obliged to abandon the idea of attempting to reach Jerusalem by Nablus. This decision involved returning to Haifa and journeying thence to Jaffa by sea, and so on to Jerusalem. Such are the vexing accidents of Eastern travel, but as our plans would not allow of our waiting several days upon the chance of the weather clearing, and as, if we did, it seemed more than doubtful whether we could obtain fresh horses, there was no choice but to bow the head to fate. Also, there were compensations. Thus, the ruins of Samaria, Jacob's Well, and the old roll of the Samaritan law excepted, there is not very much to be seen upon this Nablus route, whereas, by returning we should have the opportunity of visiting Acre and Mount Carmel and making a second halt at Nazareth. Incidentally also, as it was now no longer necessary that we should leave the Mount that morning, we had the advantage of a more prolonged exploration of Tabor with Father Barnabé as *cicerone*.

By the way, to be the priest in charge of one of these hospices during the spring, when visitors arrive, must be a somewhat arduous task. The escorting of troops of Russian pilgrims — watching the while that they do not carry the place off stone by stone as relics—is in itself a labour for which, after a time, the contemplation of their piety can scarcely compensate. Worse still, to my mind, must be the daily round of conducting a certain class of tourists, many of them careless, indifferent, or ignorant, and some not even careful to avoid paining their guide by scoffing audibly at events, scenes, and traditions, which to him are of the holiest.

Just as we returned to the monastery, after three hours of industrious examination, Mr. Brocklebank, an English clergyman, arrived. Seeing that the Father was thoroughly tired, and that he had other things in hand, I ventured to offer to take his place and escort the new-comer to the best of my ability. For this I feel that I owe my apologies to Mr. Brocklebank, since I must have been but a poor substitute for Father Barnabé. However, I did my best, though I fear that I led my victim a desperate dance whilst searching in a chaos of walls, caves, and graves for the place where the ancient Jews washed the bodies of the dead, which I was determined that he should see. At last, I am proud to say, I found it.

After lunch our wretched steeds were brought round, and, having collected the tortoise, Capernaum, and restored him to his basket, I bade farewell to Father Barnabé with very real regret and started down the mountain, though not by the road we had wished to travel. Capernaum, by the way, had, I fear, passed an unhappy night. He is a creature which dislikes cold, and, so soon as I let him loose to take the air, he made furious attempts to bury himself in the rocky soil of Tabor. When he paused exhausted from these ineffec-

tive labours one of the monastery dogs seems to have discovered him. The interview that followed must have been of a nature very similar to that which, as history relates, occurred beneath the sofa between the monkey and the parrot. It was a dishevelled and dilapidated Capernaum that went into the basket among the baggage. Thanks, however, to his thick shell, his health did not suffer materially.

On our ride over swelling hills to Nazareth we found yet other flowers, gorgeous red tulips and a most splendid variety of iris, though of this, either here or elsewhere, I saw no further specimen. In the evening we went for a long walk about the Nazareth mountains, digging up cyclamen roots, studying the character of the agriculture, and trying to identify sites. That walk in the pleasant rain-washed air, and amongst those surroundings, is one of my most agreeable recollections of our journey. Finally we revisited "Mary's Spring," and so back down the steep streets of the town. On our way a little incident occurred which revealed the difference between the manners of East and West. One of the pretty Nazareth children, a girl of about thirteen, followed me for a long way with her persistent and worrying cry of "*Baksheesh!* Hadji," that is, Pilgrim. At length I turned and put into her outstretched hand a particularly beautiful anemone which I was carrying. How the joke would have been received by an English beggar may be imagined, but this girl took the flower, curtseyed, and went away smiling.

Next morning early we started back to Haifa. On our way we met a shepherd clothed in a robe of many colours, doubtless such as Jacob gave to Joseph, and bearing upon his shoulders a lost sheep. This illustration of the saying recorded in St. Luke was really remarkable. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which

SHEPHERD CARRYING A LOST SHEEP

THE RIVER JORDAN

(*See p.* 295)

is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing."

It shows once more how closely the Saviour clung to the use of natural examples around Him as a groundwork of His parables, and how little those examples have changed in the course of nineteen centuries.

On reaching the outskirts of Haifa we struck to the left, passing some of the neat houses of the German settlement. In a field attached to one of these I saw, to my delight, a colonist using a good European plough, and congratulated him upon his enterprise. Thence we rode to the flank of Carmel, which we began to climb. About half-an-hour's ride brought us to the monastery at the top. Here monks have lived since the twelfth century, when the hermits became the Carmelites, but twice they have been burnt out and massacred, and once their church was made a mosque. Once also it was a hospital when, in 1799, the great Napoleon laid siege to Acre. Ultimately he retreated, whereupon the Turks came and butchered his wounded men in this monastery on Mount Carmel. They are buried outside its gate.

The view of sea and land from this place is very fine. Within the church we were shown the cave where Elijah hid himself. It may be so, but there are many like it all about the mountain. Leaving the monastery we began to descend the further side of Carmel by a trail so steep that we were obliged to scramble along it, driving our horses before us. Indeed the way in which these active creatures managed to keep their footing upon slanting and slippery slabs of rock, was nothing short of marvellous. However, they came down without accident. All the slopes of Carmel are covered with the most beautiful flowers and sweet herbs nurtured by the dew for which it is famous. Here, amongst other plants and shrubs, the odorous

thyme grows in masses, also white wild roses and various ground orchids.

Not far from the bottom of the mountain and facing the sea we reached the cave where, when "Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred of them and hid them by fifty." I confess that what has always puzzled me about this passage, and not less now that I have seen the place of his righteous act, is—what became of the other fifty? I suppose, that as space was limited, they had to hide outside, and take their chance of being cut off by Jezebel.

This cave, which is acknowledged by the native Jews who occasionally hold some religious service here, has all the appearance of being genuine. With packing it would accommodate fifty prophets, and there is a supply of water in a cistern cut out of the solid rock.

The next day was Sunday, and we went to the English church, although, I am sorry to say, I forget by what mission or society it is maintained. It is an exceedingly neat building, and furnished in the most excellent taste. The service was attended by a good number of native Christians, some of whom wore the fez. This custom I cannot quite understand. I noticed that our dragoman, David, who is a Christian, frequently kept on his fez in places of worship, although sometimes he took it off; for instance, in the church of the Holy Sepulchre. I asked him to explain the matter, but could get no satisfactory answer. He said it was a question of custom, and shrugged his shoulders. Orientals, as we know, show respect by covering the head and baring the feet, so, I presume, that even when they adopt another faith they are still apt to obey an immemorial tradition. The subject is one worthy of investigation by the learned. Why, for instance, should the Apostle Paul speak so strongly on this point? In the eleventh chapter of Corinthians he says, "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

But every woman who prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven. . . . For a man, indeed, ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man."

I admit that I do not understand these sayings, or what rooted conviction caused the great Apostle to deliver himself with such force upon the subject. It is difficult to comprehend why a woman dishonours her head by appearing in a place of worship without a covering, which, after all, is only designed as a protection against the weather. Or was the true origin of the habit in the East, in the case of woman, meant to be a protection against the unauthorised and inappropriate admiration of men? In other words, was the headpiece alluded to a veil or *yashmak?*

The whole matter is mysterious. For instance, why have Turks so deep a veneration for the turban? The traveller will often have noticed at the head of Ottoman graves a conical-shaped pillar, which, I am informed, is intended to symbolise the turban. I do not know if this is really the case, but I have seen in Cyprus tombs in ancient buildings that must themselves be centuries old, covering the remains of Moslem saints whose very names are forgotten, whereof the head pillar is still adorned with the actual turban of the departed. What seems the more curious is that as the cloth of this article of dress rots, fresh wrappings are, from generation to generation, wound about the decaying core by the hands of the faithful. Why is this done?

That Sunday afternoon we made an expedition to Acre, to reach which town we crossed the Kishon by a bridge not easy to negotiate, and proceeded for about two hours on a sandy road that runs along the sea-coast. Near Acre another river must be forded, the ancient Belus, now called Nahr Namên. There is a

bridge over this river also, but at present, like most things in Palestine, it is broken down, and only a few days before our visit some horses had been killed in attempting its passage. The result was that in order to cross we were obliged to wade out into the sea where the river joins it, through water which reached to our horses' bellies. Marching along the sands we met a band of Turkish conscripts, ragged and melancholy-looking peasants, who had been pressed into military service. These poor men, who must serve for five years, receive little or no pay; lucky are they if they get food and clothing. Christians are not impressed, not from any consideration for their faith or prejudices, but because the Turks, perhaps wisely, do not trust them. As the price of exemption they pay an annual tax of about 10s., which, looked at from their point of view, strikes me as an excellent bargain. Among these conscripts I noted one or two men who were quite old. David's explanation, I cannot say if it is correct, was that they had escaped conscription in past years, but, having at length fallen into the hands of the recruiting agents, were marched off to do duty as cooks or camp servants.

Acre, that we entered through a great gate, beyond which stands a fine but dilapidated house, now, we were told, occupied by soldiers, but once, as I judge, a palace, is a mass of broken fortifications, many of them dating from the crusading period. Everywhere in Acre are enormous meaningless walls, passages, and bastions. In the sea itself stands an old castle of the Crusaders; on the sea front a stretch of wall battered to ruins by shot and never rebuilt. Where once was a great Christian church now appears the yard of a caravanserai, filled, on the day of our visit, with camels and groups of Persian merchants. Round this court, formerly a place of worship, still run noble cloisters, carried upon pillars of Egyptian granite, taken, doubtless, by the Templars, or other knights, from the ruins of some pagan building,

for all the capitals are of the mediæval period and fashioned in a different stone. Above these cloisters, built over the supporting arches, stand rooms occupied by the merchants and other travellers.

Acre, which has a population of about 10,000 souls, is the most entirely Turkish town that I have visited. The inhabitants are said to be very fanatical, even more so than at Nablus. Indeed during Ramazan, the annual Mahommedan feast, I was told that it is not safe for Europeans to be seen walking about the streets, especially if they offend the prejudices of the pious sons of the Prophet by smoking. There seems to be a large garrison of Turkish soldiers in the place, and wretched-looking enough they were in their ragged and patched apology for uniform. Some of these mounted guard at the gaol. We looked through the bars of the iron gates, and saw the prisoners within, miserable wretches crowded together in a courtyard. I believe that for food they are obliged in most cases to rely upon what is given them by the charitable or their relations. If none is brought to them they starve, while from every dish the gaoler takes his toll. When they saw us they thrust skinny arms through the bars of the gate, offering for sale whips which they manufacture, the same, indeed, that are used on their own backs, only more ornamented. It would be interesting to know what is the death rate *per* thousand in these dens, and what happens when an epidemic strikes them. The same that befell at Newgate a century ago, perhaps. I left this inferno with pleasure.

Acre, then called Accho, was originally a Phœnician city. Subsequently one of the Ptolemies who captured it named the place Ptolemais, by which title it was known to St. Paul. The Arabs when they seized the town in 638 restored to it its name of Acre. In 1104 it fell into the hands of Baldwin, after which the various crusading forces used it as their principal port, and at

times as their capital. Saladin took it after the battle of Hattin, of which I have written.

Guy de Lusignan besieged it in 1189, and in 1191 Cœur-de-Lion joined him and stormed the city. Exactly a hundred years later it was recaptured by the Sultan Melik-el-Ashraf. Such is the history of Acre, or so much of it as need concern us, put in the fewest possible words.

What sights those ancient stones have seen! One may sympathise with the objects of the Crusaders. I do myself, and even, I confess, should suffer no sorrow if any of the Christian powers were moved to take the Moslem by his turban and propel him out of the small district so sacred to all that section of mankind who believe that here lived and died the Saviour and the Hope of every individual among them. Only I should prefer that it was a Protestant power, since otherwise the quarrels would be many and the oppression great. If either the Latins or the Greeks were in a position of complete authority, things would go very hardly with other sections of the Christian family. Perhaps, indeed, they would fare better at the hands of the Jews.

To return to the Crusader. His method was not equal to his motives, or mayhap a disposition not originally strained of the quality of mercy was soured by such scenes as occurred at the battle of Hattin. Long before that event, however, at Jerusalem in July 1099, the first Crusaders, under the leadership of Godfrey de Bouillon and Tancred, celebrated the storming of the city by the slaughter of over 70,000 Moslems, regardless of sex or age. The Jews, by way of variation, they burnt alive in their synagogue, and the children they threw over the wall into the Valley of Jehoshaphat. After these merciless doings Godfrey, "clad in a robe of pure white," knelt at the reputed grave of Christ in the church of the Sepulchre, and on behalf of his victorious host returned thanks to the Prince of Peace,

who had vouchsafed that Jerusalem should thus be cleansed of Infidel and Jew!

Richard of England, therefore, was but copying the most approved models of knightly grace when, after the fall of Acre, he revenged himself for some breach of faith, real or supposed, on the part of Saladin, by executing 2500 Turkish captives outside the town, while his royal brother of Burgundy put a period to the earthly troubles of an equal number within the walls. Says Geoffrey de Vinsauf in his "Itinerary of Richard I.":—

"He (that is Richard) called together a council of the chiefs of the people, by whom it was resolved that the hostages should all be hanged—[This is a mistake; their heads were cut off]—except a few nobles of a higher class, who might ransom themselves or be exchanged for some Christian captives. King Richard, aspiring to destroy the Turks root and branch and to punish their wanton arrogance, as well as to abolish the law of Mahomet and to vindicate the Christian religion, on the Friday after the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, ordered 2700 of the hostages to be led forth from the city and hanged. His soldiers marched forward with delight to fulfil his commands, and to retaliate, with the assent of the Divine Grace, by taking revenge upon those who had destroyed so many of the Christians with missiles from bows and arbalests."

James, in his "Life of Richard Cœur-de-Lion," adds that the horrid scene closed with an extended search for valuables inside the bodies of the murdered Saracens, and the careful preservation of parts of them for "medicinal uses."

When, as a lad, I inspected the original Bayeux tapestry at Bayeux, and came to understand the ideas of ornament and pictorial jest which suggested themselves to the minds of the very noblest ladies of that time, those for whose pure sakes knights endured so many discomforts and broke so many heads, my conception of the chivalry of the period, as portrayed in our popular romances, was rudely shaken. A careful study of the inner history of

the Crusades does not tend to build it up again. Yet heroic things did happen in those days. Here is another story of Acre.

Full a hundred years have gone by: Richard and his army are dust like those poor captives whom he butchered, but perhaps some of their grandsons, or great-grandsons, once more fight on the walls of Acre for the last time, since the triumph of the Crescent is at hand. Leaders were traitorous, the Moslems swarmed in thousands, and inch by inch, through streets that were a shambles, the town was taken. There was a nunnery in it, where dwelt the Virgins of St. Clare. St. Antonine and the chronicler Wadin, in his *Annales Minorum*, tell the story of their end. I am sorry that I cannot quote Wadin's account in full, as some modern tastes might find it outspoken. Here, however, is a summary.

When the Abbess, who must have been a brave woman, knew that the enemy had entered the city, she caused the bell of the convent to be rung. The sisters having assembled, she told them what they must expect in very straightforward language.

"My dear daughters, my excellent sisters," said she, "we must, in this certain danger of life and modesty, show ourselves above our sex. . . . In this crisis we cannot hope to escape their fury by flight, but we can by a resolution, painful, it is true, but sure." She then went on to point out that the sight of mutilated faces is revolting to humanity and to suggest such mutilation. Probably it was not fear but conscience which prevented her from advising a more thorough though, under the circumstances, easier and perfectly legitimate alternative—that of suicide. The Abbess ended, "I will set you the example. Let those who desire to meet their heavenly Spouse imitate their mistress." At these words she cut off her nose with a razor. "The others did the same and boldly disfigured themselves to present themselves the more beautiful before Jesus Christ."

The end of the story is simple: "For the Saracens on beholding their bleeding faces . . . killed them all without sparing one." Thus these forgotten heroic women achieved their martyrdom. What a spectacle must they have presented as thus disfigured, their white robes stained with their own blood, they sat, each in her accustomed place within the chapel, telling their beads and mumbling prayers with mutilated lips, while the devilish Saracens burst in upon them.

And it happened. This is no fiction of the romancer. A few brief generations since thus did those noble women suffer, die, and pass to their own place.

The true blood and the false showed themselves on that day of fear. Says the French historian, Michaud: "John de Gresly and Oste de Granson . . . fled away at the very commencement of the battle. Many others who had taken the oath to die, at the aspect of this general destruction only thought of saving their lives, and threw away their arms to facilitate their flight."

But there were some of a different stamp. Thus the old Patriarch of Jerusalem was dragged to the Port by his friends, resisting separation from his flock in their last agony. Nor, indeed, was he separated, since he insisted upon receiving so many fugitives into his boat that it sank and all were drowned. Then across the dark oblivious years the face of William de Clement shines like a star. When the Templars had abandoned the gate of St. Anthony he returned to it, and thrice charged the Saracens alone. Alive he regained the centre of the city. But let the old chronicler of the time tell the rest—

"Quand il fut revenu au milieu de la cité, son dextrier fut molt las, et lui-même aussi; le dextrier resista en contre les esperons, et s'arresta dans la rue comme qui n'en peut plus. Les Sarrasins, à coups de flêches, ruerent à terre frère Guillaume; ainsi ce loyal champion de Jésus Christ rendit l'âme a son Créateur."

The phrase in the mediæval French, "Le dextrier resista en contre les esperons," which I may render, "The war-horse grew callous to the spurs," is very curious and expressive.

The end of the scene was terrible. I quote from Michaud. "The sea was tempestuous, the vessels could not approach close to land; the shore presented a heart-rending spectacle; here a mother called upon her son, there a son called the assistance of his father, many precipitated themselves into the waves in despair; the mass of the people endeavoured to gain the vessels by swimming, some were drowned in the attempt, others were beaten off with oars."

There is more and worse to follow, almost too dreadful for quotation, so here let us stop. The tragedies of the Holy Land have no number, and perhaps even now they are not done with. Perchance, too, it is the same tale everywhere in the record of this cruel, bloodstained world. Only here, in the Holy Land, as it happens, those among us—but few, I suppose—who delve in the annals of the past, know their history wherein, in this instance, the greatest interests of mankind chance to be concerned. The sun of the Crusaders rose in blood, and in blood it set. "I came to bring not peace but a sword." Truly in Palestine, the very place of His coming, more even than elsewhere, that saying has been fulfilled. Why, we ask, why? our hearts stirred with common human pity for all those tormented dead. There is no answer, or none that we can understand.

Also the subject is very painful, so we will leave it—and Acre.

CHAPTER XVIII

JAFFA

To leave Haifa is comparatively easy, since, owing to a certain amount of shelter which the harbour enjoys, it is only in really bad storms that the traveller cannot embark. Thus on the night of our departure the sea was still high, but we managed, with some discomfort it is true, to win on board the steamer. To disembark at Jaffa is quite another thing.

Now there are two ways of proceeding from Haifa to Jaffa—by sea, which, of course, is simple, in good weather; or to drive a matter of sixty miles over a hideous apology for a road, which runs along the sea-coast. This involves two full days' travelling, including a start at three or four in the morning on the second day, and a miserable expenditure, since such transport is not cheap. Long and anxiously did I ponder over the alternative. Look you, my reader, if the sea is rough at Jaffa, this happens. You go on to that singularly uninteresting place, Port Said, whence, after several days in an hotel at your own charges, you may, if lucky, take another boat back to Jaffa. Then, if the sea is still rough, you proceed to Beyrout, thence to return to Jaffa in a week or ten days' time. Then, if the sea is still rough, once more you visit Port Said, and so on *ad nauseam*.

This is no fancy picture. We had fellow-travellers to whom these things happened, as they happened to those bold voyagers who, in face of my experienced advice, determined to try to land at Paphos, in Cyprus, an example that the reader may recall. Remembering

past woes, indeed, some who tarried at Haifa went the length of hiring a carriage to tow them through the sands to Jaffa, but I reasoned with them.

"Luck," I said, "ought to change; it was cowardly to give in. The courage of man and the perseverance of woman ought not to be overcome by the billows that break on the rocks of Jaffa." They were stirred to enthusiasm. Also they bethought them of that two days' expensive drive through quick drifts and mud-holes, and the 3 A.M. awakening on the second morning.

"Listen," said a lady solemnly, "if we get off safe at Jaffa I shall bless you. If we don't, I never want to see or hear your name again."

I replied that in either event I feared she might come across it some time, and we started.

I hope that in her transatlantic home for the rest of her life that lady may remember me with regard, as I remember her. For as it chanced on this occasion, we landed in a fashion so prosperous—the sea having conveniently gone down during the night—that even then instinct told me Jaffa had a card up its sleeve to be played some day for my especial benefit.

This was the port most frequented by the old pilgrims, and concerning it their tales of woe are many. A pilgrimage in the Middle Ages was a very serious matter. No statistics are available, but a somewhat extensive inquiry into the subject, and the reading of many books, suggests to me that not more than about fifty per cent. of those enterprising voyagers returned to their respective homes, while the other half endured miseries that to-day we should consider overwhelming. Says the old monk, Felix Fabri, writing in the fifteenth century:—

"O, my God! what a hard and tedious excursion; with how many sufferings was it spoiled. During this excursion I saw many vigorous young noblemen perish, who once had thought in their own conceit that they could rule the waves of the sea and

weigh the lofty mountains in scales; but who at last died by the just judgment of God, broken down by hardships and lamentably humbled in spirit. May God give those who call this pilgrimage an easy excursion the power of feeling its sorrows, that they may learn to have compassion for the pilgrims to the Holy Land which they deserve. It requires courage and audacity to attempt this pilgrimage. That many are tempted by sinful rashness and idle curiosity cannot be doubted; but to reach the holy places and to return to one's home active and well is the especial gift of God."

Johann van Kootwyck, who made the pilgrimage about a century later than Felix Fabri, portions of whose work have been translated from the Latin by Cobham, has left advice as to the outfit necessary in his day to a trip through the Holy Land. It begins by recommending the pilgrim to make a will and arrange all his earthly affairs, which shows what was thought of the prospects of his return. Then it sets out the costs of the passage and board upon a galley. That these were considerable is proved by the fact that before the licence of the Papal legate could be obtained the pilgrim must show "that he can afford to spend at the very least one hundred gold pieces on the journey." Now in 1598 I suppose that one pound went as far as three to-day, if not a good deal further. Therefore it would seem that the pilgrim must have possessed at least £300 to spend upon this enterprise alone—that is, supposing the gold piece referred to having been approximately of the value of a sovereign. Also he must take with him a box containing a mattress, a pillow, and a pair of sheets (these last seem an unnecessary luxury), which box ought to measure six feet long by three feet wide, so that it could serve as a bed. It must have looked uncommonly like a coffin. Perhaps the pilgrim sometimes returned inside it, and—good, thoughtful man—had this contingency in view. Then he must be provided with half-a-dozen shirts, although collars were not considered a necessity

(this is specified), a sailor's cap, towels, handkerchiefs, two pounds of soap (this, again, seems luxurious for a pilgrim), "twenty pounds of the best biscuit, some good wine, cinnamon, ginger, nutmegs and cloves, with pomegranates, oranges, and lemons, also sugar and laxative medicine." However, he was advised to carry no arms, to wear the roughest clothes only, so as to avoid being robbed, and, above all, carefully to conceal his cash. In many parts of Syria this counsel holds as good now as on the day that it was given.

Even when the expensive fare had been paid on the galley, according to friend Felix, the accommodation afforded would not now be considered passable by a steerage passenger on a liner.

"A pilgrim can hardly move about without touching his neighbour (that is, while sleeping); moreover, the place is enclosed, and exceeding hot and full of various foul vapours. Wherefore, one must needs sweat all night, which greatly mars one's rest. Fleas and lice swarm there at that time in countless numbers, also mice and rats. Oftentimes, I may say every night, I have risen silently and gone up into the open air, and felt as though I had been freed from some filthy prison."

Then he tells of the heat of the sun, of the darkness, foul air, and overcrowding of cabins, adding "that although the blowing of the wind is essential to those who sail in a ship, yet it is very unpleasant," after which follows a masterly picture of sea-sickness, clearly by one who had experience. Next we have more about fleas, flies, gnats (query mosquitoes), mice, and rats, which eat up "the private larders" and spoil the shoes, and other mysterious creatures. "Moreover, the damp on board ship breeds fat white worms, which crawl everywhere and come by stealth upon men's legs and faces; and when a man becomes aware of them and puts his finger to them, thinking them flies"—the rest is too nasty to quote. No wonder that Felix adds: "Unless Divine

Providence had thus ordered it, no man could live on board of large old ships."

About the terrors of the deep he filled pages, for they impressed him much. Sometimes, however, although an acute observer and a man who loved the truth, Fabri was, I fear, imposed upon with travellers' tales. Listen:—

"Yet another peril is to be met with which is called Troyp, from the fish Trois, which, when it becomes aware of the ship, comes forth from the depths and pierces the ship with his beak; for he has a beak fashioned like an augur, and unless he be driven away from the ship he bores through it. He cannot be forced away from the ship save by a fearless look, so that one should lean out of the ship over the water, and unflinchingly look into the eyes of the fish, while the fish meanwhile looks at him with a terrible gaze. If he who looks at the fish grows terrified and begins to turn his eyes away, the beast straightway rises, snatches him down beneath the water and devours him. Let this suffice about the perils of the sea."

Imagination fondly pictures the pious Felix and that fish trying to stare each other out of countenance. Perhaps "Trois" had something to do with the Jaffa legend that here Andromeda was bound and rescued from the dragon. Of this story Sir John Mandeville (1322) has made a most marvellous hash:—

"And you shall understand that it (Joppa) is one of the oldest towns of the world, for it was founded before Noah's flood. And there may still be seen in the rock there the place where the iron chains were fastened, wherewith Andromeda, a great giant (*sic*), was bound and put in prison before Noah's flood; a rib of whose side, which is forty feet long, is still shown."

This is a downright libel on Andromeda, that fair maid whom we see in every Academy, often three times over, attended by a pleasing variety of dragons. Still, if some artist would paint her, or him, according to Mandeville, the change would be refreshing.

Felix, a man of learning, has the legend much more

correctly, but even he talks of "the virgin giantess, Andromeda." Evidently, also, there was something in Mandeville's story of the bone, since Felix says:—

"The bones of that sea monster which Perseus slew were of vast size, and used to be publicly on the beach over against the city, and were shown to all who visited Joppa; but afterwards they were removed from thence to Rome by Titus and Vespasian, and hung up in a public place for a marvel, for, indeed, they were worthy of admiration, for every one of its ribs were forty-one feet in length. But Saint Sylvester, and the other saints who consecrated Rome to Christ, broke up those bones and all other marvels, lest pilgrims should come hither to see them, and likewise lest pilgrims who had come to Rome for the sake of honouring God and His Apostles should lose their time and waste hours which might be spent in prayer in viewing such strange sights. Some declare that these were the bones of the virgin giantess Andromeda, which seems impossible, because Perseus took Andromeda away with him into Persia, and ended his days there, and we nowhere read of his coming back to Joppa."

It will be observed that Felix does not question the authenticity of the bones because their dimensions are somewhat unusual, but because Perseus took his wife to live with him elsewhere and did not bring her back. The vision of a lady who measured eighty-two feet (not inches) round the waist does not seem to have struck his imagination as a thing particularly out of the common. Nor did he consider it from the point of view of her husband Perseus, or, indeed, of the poor dragon who was expected to eat her.

Josephus also mentions the matter, but in a very different style; his was not an age of fable. He says:—

"Here is the impression of Andromeda's chain, which is supposed to have been cut in the rock with a view to giving credibility to the ancient fable."

In truth these old chroniclers, whether for fact or fiction, are very fascinating to read. In their pages we

are transported to a realm strangely real yet fanciful. There, like the figments of some dream, peoples and rulers long departed pass in shadowy procession before our eyes. The things they strove for, their ambitions, their rare virtues, their bloody crimes are matters to muse on in an idle hour—no more. They have gone, utterly; all their tumults and battlings are dust, for the most part unfruitful as that of their own bones. Their very names are forgotten, not one in a million is known, and of these how many are remembered even by students? Yet the sea of Jaffa which affrighted them still hisses by the vessel's side, the narrow Via Dolorosa upon the holy hill of Zion, that they trod—some of them with sighs and tears, or, some of them, "up to their horses' knees in blood"—still lies open to our feet. The pale olives of Gethsemane beneath which they knelt still flower and fruit upon the Mount. The stage is the same, only the actors have changed. That ancient frame does continual duty to new pictures which the showman Time throws upon his screen. Here the series grows long, stretching from the day of Moses down. But how many more of them are there to come, those strange forth-shadowings of generations yet unborn, not to be born, perhaps, for thousands upon thousands of years, so deep in time that to them we may seem further off than Moses is to us? Well, such speculations lead nowhere, so let us return to our own particular pilgrimage experienced in our own individual hour.

The embarkation at Haifa was disagreeable, and the night on board was crowded, circumstances that added to our joy when we found the morning fine, and were therefore relieved of the terror of being carried on prematurely to Port Said. This was the second time in my life that I have passed through the grinning jaws of the Jaffa reefs. Once a good many years ago when I chanced to be off this port, I landed and spent a day there, just to be able to think that I had trodden the

soil of the Holy Land. I remember on this occasion witnessing a furious quarrel betweem a custom-house guard in a boat and a washerwoman bringing off clean linen to a ship in another boat. The guard wanted to seize the linen, or probably to extort *baksheesh*, but the lady defended her goods with a shrill and voluble tongue, calling this representative of the Ottoman law unsavoury names, and reflecting upon his parents for several generations back. Indeed, as her boat bobbed up and down over the swell, she shook her fist beneath the watchman's martial nose till at length, thoroughly out-talked, he drew his pistol on her, and thus I left them. Now, oddly enough, no one seems able to tell me the end of the story.

Landing at Jaffa is a tumultuous affair even in the best of weather, but we accomplished it without so much as a wetting, and were marched to the hotel where we had six or eight hours to wait until the train started for Jerusalem.

Jaffa, the Joppa of the Bible, has much the same history as other coast towns in Palestine. It was taken by Pharaoh Thotmes III. and was the port of the Holy City whither in the days of Hiram came the cedar from Lebanon. "And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need; and we will bring it thee in floats by sea to Joppa, and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem." And again in Ezra: "They gave money also unto the masons and to the carpenters; and meat and drink and oil unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus, king of Persia."

The Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans were its masters, all in turn; several times it has been razed—by Cestius, by Vespasian, by Melik-el-Adil twice, by Safaddin, by Richard of England, by Beibars, by Napoleon. In the time of Felix Fabri the place, of which he says, "I believe that there is hardly another such abominable

harbour to be found in the whole circuit of the sea," seems to have been almost a total ruin. At any rate, the only lodging for the pilgrim was "a darksome and decayed dwelling beneath a ruinous vault, known as St. Peter's cellars, wherein the Saracens thrust him, even as men are wont to thrust a sheep into a stable to be milked." As the place was full of the most abominable filth, we learn with satisfaction that "in this cavern there is a seven years' indulgence, which the pilgrim obtains if he enters therein with a devout spirit."

There is very little to see in Jaffa, although the traveller is shown the roof upon which St. Peter slept when the vision of things clean and unclean came to him, as he "tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner." This site, as Baedeker points out, has been changed of late years; formerly it was at the Latin monastery, now it is over a little mosque. It seems probable that there is nothing to prove the authenticity of either spot. How can there be in a town which has been destroyed so many times? What is authentic and unchangeable, however, is the heap of dirt outside the door of the sacred building. After many years I knew the sight of it again; also its noisome scent floated into my nostrils like some sweet remembered odour of earliest childhood. There it lies, that miniature but ancestral midden, and there, doubtless, it will lie from generation to generation until the Turk departs from the coasts of Syria.

Thence we drove to the Greek church, where the visitor is shown what is said to be the tomb of Tabitha and the place where Peter "gave her his hand and lifted her up, and . . . presented her alive," so that "it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord." The tomb seems to be some ancient catacomb, but whether or no the bones of Tabitha reposed in it, who can tell?

When last I was here, as I have noted was the

case at Famagusta, in Cyprus, the orange groves were beautiful to behold. Now ninety trees out of every hundred are diseased, though I am not sure that the pest which is destroying them is the same as has devastated Cyprus. I am inclined to think that they are more afflicted by some sickness of the root than with the brown and black scale. At least the results are identical—thousands of them are dying.

In the Armenian monastery there is a room, if any care to look at it, where a peculiarly dreadful tragedy is said to have occurred, that of the poisoning of a number of his own soldiers who were smitten with the plague, by order of Napoleon the Great, when he retreated from Jaffa in 1799. It seems probable, however, that this story is exaggerated. According to Batjin's "Napoleon 1er," the only history of the emperor which I have at hand, the men were not poisoned. But, as it was determined to leave them behind, to enable them to escape massacre at the hand of the Turks, poison was placed by their bedsides, which they could swallow if they thought fit.

Napoleon is represented as having said, "Je serais toujours disposé à faire pour mes soldats ce que je ferais pour mon propre fils," a sentiment which, considering the occasion, will make most people thankful that Providence did not do them the honour of appointing to them this distinguished parent. M. Batjin, we may gather, does not share that view, since the heading of the chapter under which he deals with this gruesome incident is "nouvel example de sa (Bonaparte's) sollicitude pour les pestiferés." One wonders if the poor "pestiferés," before partaking of the bane so thoughtfully provided in order to save their beloved general the trouble of their transport, defined his sympathetic foresight in exactly the same words.

Like many other men whom we call "great," Napoleon did not stick at trifles. Some pages back I talked of the performance of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, when he caused

whole regiments of captive Saracens to be massacred outside Acre, and added, I think, that such acts tended to blight the reader's ideal of the vaunted chivalry of the period. At the moment I had forgotten that but one century ago the same thing happened outside Jaffa, Bonaparte, possibly inspired by his example, but with even less excuse, filling the *rôle* of Richard of England. There, on those shell-strewn sands, he marched out his captives and butchered them, "taking precautions to prevent any escaping." M. Batjin's sole comment upon the occurrence, so far as I can discover, is: "La ville fut prise d'assaut, le même jour a cinq heurs du soir, 4000 hommes de la garnison furent passé par les armes." Clearly our author thinks it well to be a little blind to such lapses of the national hero into mediævalism.

If all the trains that leave Charing Cross in the course of a busy day were to start during one single hour, I do not suppose that the sum of the noise and confusion would equal that which occurs at the station at Jaffa when the daily tram—it is scarcely more—gets itself off for Jerusalem. Heavens! how those dusky, untamed sons of the desert fight and yell. How they stagger to and fro beneath the boxes, hurling them to earth here, there, and everywhere. How they clamour for *baksheesh!* How they rush to procure seats for their various patrons and demand more *baksheesh!* What life, what excitement, what turmoil, what arguments, what deadly feuds! What vociferations on the part of the officials! But we get off somehow in a very crowded carriage, and the various dragomen, clad in their best attire for the entry into Jerusalem, explain, as their command of English or French gives them grace, the wonders through which we are passing.

Here is the fertile plain of Sharon looking rather desolate beneath its cloak of windy wet. There is the place where the ark was set up in the temple of Dagon to the dire discomfiture of the Philistines, who suffered

so sorely from its presence and found it so difficult to be rid of. Yonder, according to all traditions, Samson tied torches to the tails of a vast number of foxes—I think it was three hundred. This feat leaves the modern wondering how he managed to snare so many all at once, for in any time or country to catch a fox is not easy. There, too, in that village he was born, and there he died.

Old Testament history, studied from the windows of a railway carriage, becomes, it must be confessed, a little confusing. But without doubt this was the territory of the Philistines, and the fact brings home to the mind how very small is the area wherein were enacted the great events recorded in the Bible. Soon the plains are left behind, and we begin to climb the mountains that lie about Jerusalem like a wall. Barren hill succeeds barren hill. Perhaps once they were clothed with vineyards; now only flowering cyclamen grow in the crannies of the rocks.

At length, about six o'clock, the train pulls up, and once more fierce confusion begins to reign. We have reached Jerusalem. The mountain wind blows bitterly; the rain falls in torrents, and everywhere one steps in liquid mud. Sometimes it is two, sometimes four, sometimes six inches deep; the experienced choose the two-inch strata, the flurried wallow in the six-inch depths. The local Cook appears, drags us into a carriage, and off we flounder. Presently, what looks like a mediæval tower rises before us. We are informed that it is the castle of David, now the Turkish citadel, which is believed to be, at any rate so far as its foundations are concerned, the Phasaël built by Herod, one of the few places that Titus did not destroy when he sacked the town and burned the temple. We pass through the Jaffa gate and the walls built by the Saracens, that still give to Jerusalem the appearance of a strongly-fortified, mediæval city, and so, by streets which we cannot distinguish in the wet and gathering gloom, to our hotel.

Next morning we awoke to the sound of a roaring gale and of rain dashing against the window, such rain as, according to Bishop Arculf, who visited Jerusalem about the year 700, "exhibits God's peculiar attachment to this place" by washing out the streets after an annual fair. It was cold also, bitterly cold; almost might the traveller have fancied himself once more in Florence. I clad myself very warmly, topping up with a covert coat and a macintosh, but when David saw me as we prepared to start upon our expedition, he said it would not do at all, that I did not understand the climate of Jerusalem, and must put on my ulster also. I obeyed, and before I returned thanked him for his advice.

In places the narrow lanes of Jerusalem were running inches deep with water beneath the lashing of the torrents which, as Arculf remarks, provides them with their only washing. Indeed, they are filthy, almost as filthy as those of Tiberias, if such a thing be possible, especially in quarters inhabited by the Jews, where none should linger. We passed through the crowded bazaars, now reeking in a damp, cold mist that seemed to embalm the smells, accompanied by a *cavass* from the Consulate and a soldier, whose protection is supposed to be necessary to the visitor to the Harâm-esh-Sherîf, the Noble Sanctuary, where once stood the temples and palaces of Solomon and Herod. It is approached, or, at least, we approached it, by a kind of covered-in alley of a filthiness so peculiar and surpassing that before it everything else of the kind which I have seen in the Holy Land sinks its ineffectual stench. Imagine a people who are content that so foul an avenue should lead to their great sanctuary.

We went up steps, and were within the sacred area. It is a great place covering many acres—I never heard their number—but much of it is overgrown

with grass, amongst which were blooming blue flowers like those of borage. Just now, also, it was sodden with rain—very grey and desolate to the eye beneath the low, scudding clouds.

It was with curious feelings that at length I set foot upon this hill-top, the womb, as it were, of the world's fate, where have been enacted so many of the most awful scenes of history, spiritual and human. Here the Ark stood. Here great Solomon built his fane without sound of saw or hammer, that fane which was to be destroyed and re-arise, again to be destroyed and again arise. Here at last dawned the light of that predestined day when the Roman eagles were borne across it, and the hallowed temple of Jehovah went up in sheets of fire to Heaven. Here the Veil was rent, and the Sanctuary desecrated, while the blood of its votaries ran ankle-deep into the vaults below. Men have worshipped here by millions. They have perished here by tens and twenties of thousands. The voice of Christ has echoed here. The shouts of the victors, the screams of the conquered, the moans of the dying, the solemn sounds of sacrifice, the blare of ceremonial trumpets, the daily whisper of a people's reverent prayer—it has heard them all in turn. Here stood Solomon in his glory, and all the congregation of Israel before the Ark of the Lord, in which was nothing "save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb." Here "the cloud filled the House of the Lord," and Solomon said, "I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever." Here he prayed "that thine eyes may be opened towards this house night and day." Here, too, came the answer when Jehovah appeared to the king a second time, that his petition should be fulfilled while the men of Israel and their children remain faithful. But if not, "then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I

SITE OF THE TEMPLE OF THE JEWS

have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people: And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house?"

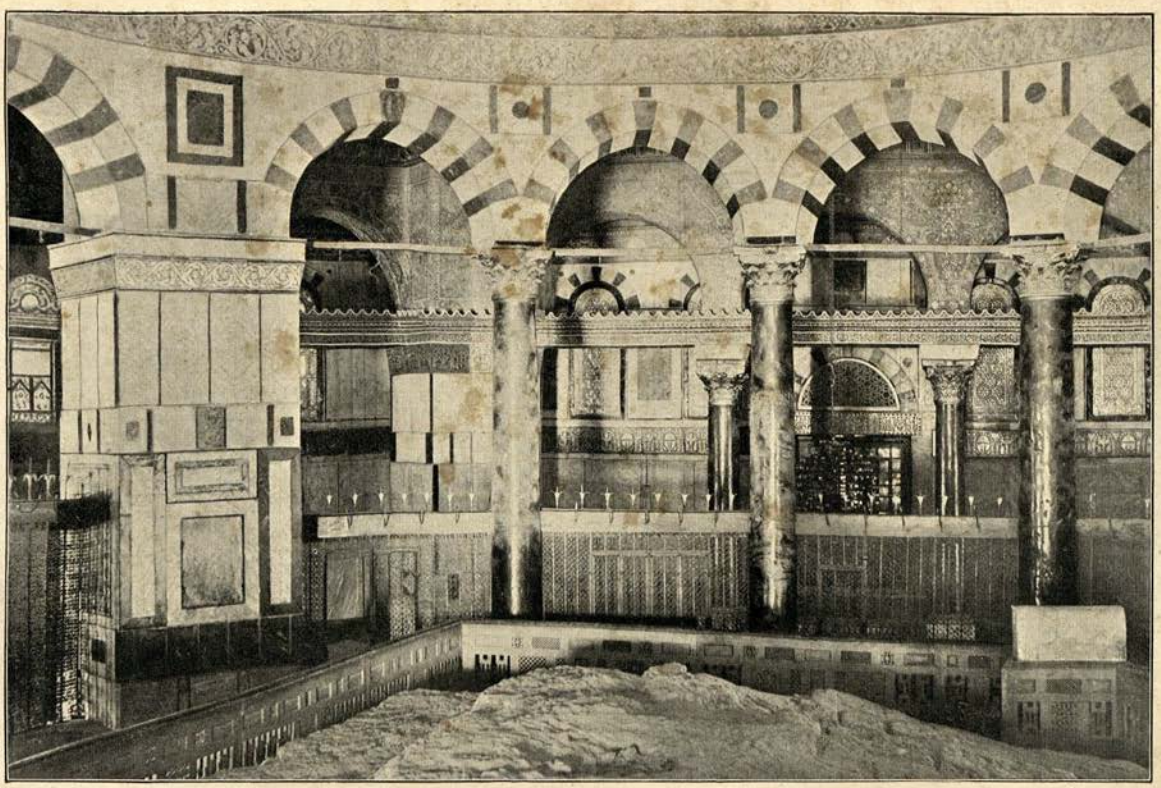
Are they not astonished, and do not the nations of the earth speak thus to-day when the high home of God has become a chief tabernacle of the false prophet, where the Christian is admitted under guard and on sufferance, and the Jew, whose heritage it is, may not so much as set his foot?

CHAPTER XIX

THE NOBLE SANCTUARY, THE POOLS OF SOLOMON AND BETHLEHEM

THE Mosque of the Rock, known as the Noble Sanctuary, where once stood the Temple of the Jews, is a beautiful building, even to those who, like myself, do not particularly admire the oriental style of architecture; also it is already ancient. At its door a Mahommedan priest received us, and rough wrappings of sackcloth were bound about our feet, which, as they were wet through and cold, to me were comfortable. Then we entered the place, where we found ourselves quite alone. It is spacious with a great dome; its windows are full of lovely and ancient stained glass; its walls set with harmonious Eastern tiles; its floors covered with rich carpets. Underneath the dome, fifty feet or more in length, surrounded by an old iron screen and one of wood, stands the sacred rock, where Abraham is said to have made ready Isaac for slaughter, where, too, as seems to be generally admitted, stood the Jewish altar of Sacrifice for many generations. Indeed there is a hole pierced through its centre that received, it is thought, the blood of the victims, which was carried away by the drains beneath.

Some fine, natural instinct, or perhaps a priestly tradition, caused the Hebrews to leave that rock untouched. Except for the steps cut on it by the Crusaders it is much as Nature made it in the beginning, and doubtless so it will remain until the end. Millions of years ago it was heaved up in the first cataclysms of the universe.



INTERIOR OF THE NOBLE SANCTUARY, SHOWING THE SACRED ROCK

Thousands, or millions of years hence it will crumble and disappear in the last general catastrophe. The sacred associations that make it famous above every other stone in the world—even that of Mecca—will cling, as it were, to but one hour of the immeasurable æons during which it is destined to endure. Through long, long epochs it must have been but a rock upon a mountain breast. Through other epochs yet to come again it may be but a rock upon a mountain breast. But for two thousand years or so it was the Altar of God, that atom of His wide creation from which His chosen people offered Him praise and incense, symbolised in their burnt sacrifices. This rugged mass of stone impressed me more than all the vaunted glories of the Noble Sanctuary. Also it is a true relic. The courts, the walls, the columns, they have vanished every one. No trace of them is left above the ground. Yet that rock of ages still remains, the only thing, as I suppose, connected with their worship which has witnessed the history of the Jews almost from the beginning, that still witnesses it, and will in some far age witness its end, whatever that end may be.

We saw many things in the mosque. For instance, there is the cavern beneath the rock, with places where David and Solomon used to pray, and a round hole above, made, we were solemnly assured, by the head of Mahomet as he went up to heaven like a cannon-ball. This hole, however, as I believe, has to do with the blood channels from the altar of Sacrifice. The Mussulmen say that at the last Judgment the Almighty will take His seat upon this rock, and that beneath the cavern is the Pit of Spirits, where on certain days in every week the deceased assemble to their devotions. Visitors to the Noble Sanctuary hear many such stories, most of them connected with the Prophet, all of which must be listened to with becoming gravity and reverence. For my part, I found the task trying, as, without indorsing friend

Felix's vigorous views,[1] I chance to hold strong opinions upon the subject of this prophet, whose doctrines will, I believe, cause even more bloodshed and misery in the world in the future than they have brought upon it in the past. It is, however, a part of the experience.

Among other things we were shown a stone slab into which Mahomet, who, by the way, I believe was never here in the flesh, hammered nineteen golden nails. At the end of every century, or upon the occurrence of any very important event, the devil removes one of these nails. He has now got them all except three and a half, for the angel Gabriel just caught him in time and caused him to break one in his hurry. When he succeeds in abstracting the rest, the world will come to a sudden end, or thus say the Mahommedans. What a chance is here for that practically-minded traveller of whose dealings with an ancient lamp I have already told the tale. Picture the faces of the faithful when next morning they found those last nails gone, and the end of all things coming up like a torpedo-boat under a full head of steam. Only he might find these warlike Moslems more difficult to deal with than proved the poor old priest.

Our holy guide intimated to me that by placing money upon this nail-stone I should assure my eternal safety. Accordingly I purchased salvation to the value of ninepence in small change, which he pocketed. Then we went on and saw more wonders.

Leaving the Mosque of the Dome, we visited the

[1] At this time Mahomet, the devil incarnate, the first-born of Asmodeus, the son of Belial, the messenger of Satan, the deceiver of the world, the confusion of mankind, the destroyer of the Church of God, the false prophet, the forerunner of Antichrist, yea, Antichrist himself, the fulfilment of heresies, the corrupter of the divine laws, the persecutor of the faithful, and the miracle of all that is false, began to display his madness, that the lamentable prophecy set forth in Revelations xiii. about him might be fulfilled, because he was that horrible and detestable beast whom John saw rising out of the earth, having two horns—and so forth. —*The Book of the Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri.*

Dome of the Chain, a beautiful little building which is called David's Judgment-seat, and also the Dome of the Ascension, a memorial of another of the miracles of Mahomet. Then we were shown the entrances to various cisterns, especially a vast reservoir which must have existed in the time of our Lord, that is known as "The Sea." This used to be supplied with water from Solomon's Pools, that lie at a distance of several miles from Jersualem. Next we came to the Mosque el-Aksa, known, too, as the Mosque of Omar, because that Caliph defiled it, converting it from a Christian church into a place of worship according to the Prophet. It is still very beautiful, with a nave, aisles, and a basilica, which were built by the Emperor Justinian to serve as a shrine to the Virgin. Here we were regaled with more Mahommedan legends, a well being shown to us down which some good man went after a fallen bucket, contrary to every expectation to find himself in Paradise. Also, there are two columns set close together, and he who cannot squeeze between them has no hope of Heaven. It seems, however, that so many stout Moslems got set fast or injured themselves in their mad attempt to pass where natural curves would not permit, that now the practice is forbidden, and the space between the columns has been shut off with a railing.

Such follies were not always confined to Mahommedans, however, since Felix Fabri mentions that about the year 1480 there was a place between a pillar and a wall, I think, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, through which pilgrims tried to squeeze. Those who succeeded received a considerable remission of their purgatorial pains, especially promised and guaranteed by those who had control of the matter.

The pulpit in this mosque is a rich miracle of good carving. It dates from 1168, and is said to have been presented by Saladin.

Leaving the Mosque of Omar we descended into

vast crypt-like vaults, which are called Solomon's stables, though experts declare that they were rebuilt in Saracenic times. It is, however, quite possible that the horses of the Jewish kings once stood in these caverns. Indeed I have noticed how common it is in the East to use caves or underground places as a stable, probably because these are cooler in summer. Whoever built or rebuilt them, certainly the Crusaders made use of this sub-structure, for holes bored in angles of the columns can still be seen through which ran their halter ropes. In a passage leading to these vaults we were shown gigantic blocks of stone which, I suppose, were put in place by Phœnician workmen in the days of Solomon. That they could be moved at all without the aid of modern machinery is little short of wonderful.

Having inspected everything, at length we emerged by a narrow stairway into the open, and walked across a great expanse of the temple field to the eastern wall. It was soaked with rain, but as I went I could not help remembering that there were periods in its history when it has been as wet as this with blood. Here in one day fell 8500 men in a struggle between the Zealots and the party of John during the siege by Titus. Here too, at the conclusion of that siege, a motley multitude of 6000 were shrivelled up in the conflagration of the royal cloister, while 10,000 others were slaughtered without by the Roman soldiery.

Mounting the walls by steps built in them, we could see beneath us the Valley of Jehoshaphat, with its thousands of tombs covering the dust of Jews who have been brought hither for burial. A very ancient tradition among both Christians and Moslems tells that here will be the scene of the last Judgment. It is founded, I suppose, upon the verses in Joel: "Let the heathen be wakened (new version: Let the nations bestir themselves) and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen

(new version: All the nations) round about. . . . Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake."

Then the prophet goes on to tell that thereafter Jerusalem shall be holy, "and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."

In the day of Felix Fabri the Saracens of Palestine already held this belief, though the Arabs placed the last Judgment at Mecca, and the Syrians selected Damascus. Those who put their faith in the Valley of Jehoshaphat said that there would be three Judges—the Almighty, the Christ, and Mahomet. The First Person was to be seated on the pinnacle of the temple, the Second Person on the top of the Mount of Olives, while the Prophet, present in the capacity of a councillor, would take his place upon a piece of broken column, which to this day still projects from the wall of the Haram. Another tradition is that Christ and Mahomet will be the judges, Mahomet occupying a place upon the Mount of Olives. Between the Mount and the column, spanning the Valley of Jehoshaphat, will stretch a rope, over which every soul must pass. The fate of the wicked may be guessed, but the righteous will go across with the ease of a Blondin.

About this broken pillar—I wonder, by the way, how it can possibly have come into its present position—Felix tells a curious story with which I do not remember meeting elsewhere. Not long before his time a certain Saracen prophet came to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, followed by all the people of the city, to whom he promised that he would show to them details hitherto unknown concerning the last Judgment. To that end "this child of the devil" climbed up to the broken pillar

by help of ladders, and, seating himself astride upon it with his back to the wall, began to prophesy. Unfortunately for himself, evidently he was a preacher with action, and, forgetting the dangerous nature of his seat, yielded to the excitement of the moment, and began to fling about his arms. Now, this column, as we still may see, has been highly polished, and presently there happened to that unfortunate expounder of the last Judgment an accident such as is apt to chance to careless people who ride with loose girths. Suddenly he slipped, and, his seat being so smooth, was quite unable to recover himself. One frantic, ineffectual grasp, and where his head had been appeared his heels; then down he came, and was smashed like an egg in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, a catastrophe over which Felix does not seem to grieve. "The silly people," he remarks, "were confounded, and went back into the city, every man to his own home. Thus did the false prophet, contrary to his intention, show them the proof not by words but by deeds."

Felix mentions also, in another volume, that in his day there was a Moslem cemetery in the valley, opposite to the Golden Gate, to which he was not allowed to approach. Formerly, it seems, the Latins and Armenians celebrated an annual festival at this gate, through which our Lord is said to have passed on the first Palm Sunday, "until, at the instigation of the devil, the Saracens began to bury their damned dead here, after which they blocked up the gate."

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." Standing on that lofty wall, and looking northwards, what a picture is called up! The wide white-tombed valley full of dead, the naked mountains beyond choked with dead standing rank above rank even in the empty air till their number joins earth to heaven; the myriad dead of every age and generation come hither unto judgment. From the countless graves below, from the way of the sea, from

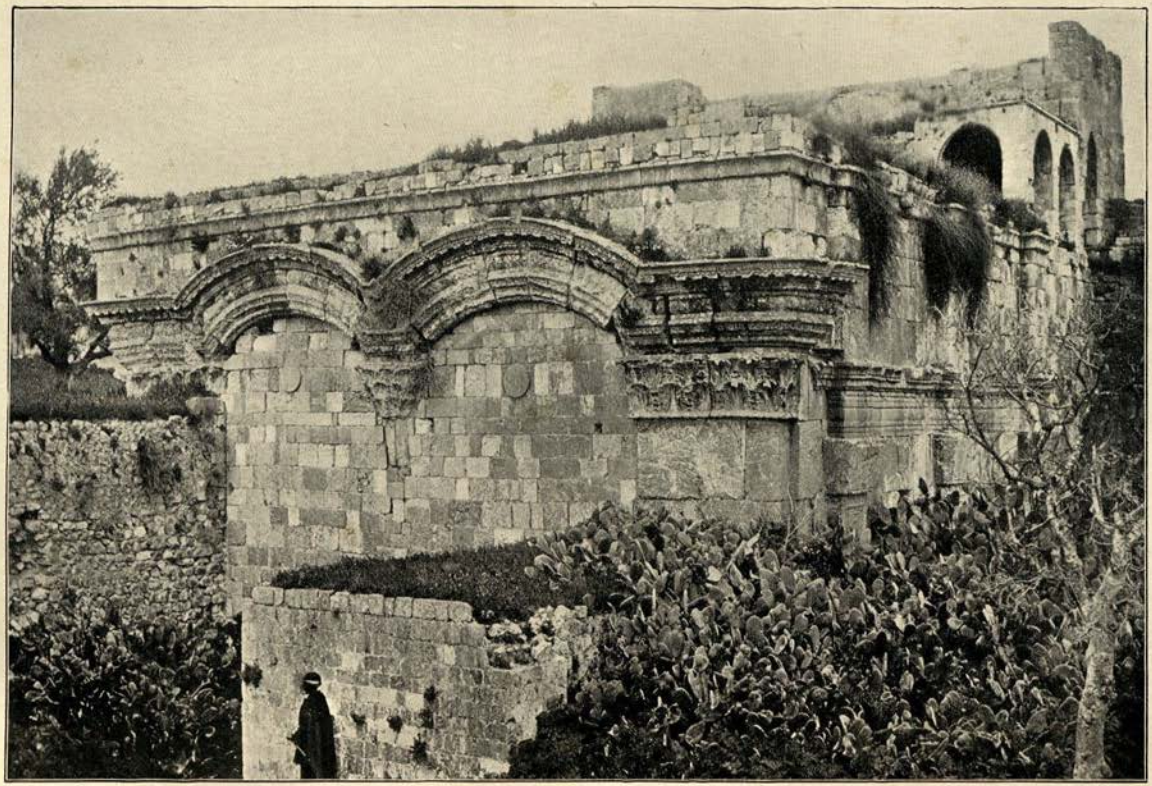


Photo : Frith

THE GOLDEN GATE

each acre of earth's surface, dead, dead, nothing but dead, rushing on to judgment in the gorge of Jehoshaphat. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." And above, facing each other in the sick heaven, the black balls of the sun and moon discerned by the light of the flaring, shivering, dying stars!

Walking along the wall we came to the Golden Gate, which by some is believed to be the Beautiful Gate spoken of in the Acts. No man goes through it for it is built up. Here passed Christ, while the people cried Hosanna and threw palms upon His path. The Mahommedans have a belief that on a certain Friday, none know when, a Christian conqueror will enter by this gate and hunt them from Jerusalem for ever. Perhaps that is why they wall it up. In itself the building is striking, but I will not attempt its detailed description. Experts say that in its present form it dates from the Byzantine period.

At length we had visited everything we were allowed to look at, and turned for a while to contemplate the whole expanse of this great and sacred place that has seen so much, and for aught we know, has still so much to see. Then we parted from our guide and guard with mutual compliments, pointed in a manner best understood in the East, and returned to the city, following the tortuous line of the Via Dolorosa. Along this street the Saviour is supposed to have borne His cross—indeed, by tablets and otherwise, each "station" is recorded to an inch, upon what authority I have not been able to discover. Still millions have accepted and continue to accept the tradition.

Afterwards we visited what is now shown as the Pool of Bethesda. I cannot say if it is the true site which has been claimed for other springs. This is certain, however, that it agrees very closely with the conditions described in the Gospels. Many steps lead to this darksome pool—to be accurate, there are two pools. The

steepness of these steps make it evident that no maimed or impotent person could have climbed down them quickly without assistance. It is possible, however, that here were nothing but cisterns, fed by some underground fountain. Above are the remains of a chapel, discovered, I understand, in the course of recent excavations, and built apparently during the crusading period.

Our next expedition of importance was to the Pools of Solomon, about six miles from Jerusalem, which once they helped to supply with water. Now the aqueduct is broken, and practically the only water in the city is obtained from cisterns that are filled by the rains. So long as these cisterns remain clean their water is good, but they are not always clean. Also towards the end of summer the supply fails. Then there is much sickness.

It is said, I believe with truth, that some years ago the Baroness Burdett-Coutts offered to restore the broken aqueduct at a cost of about £20,000. Thereupon the Turkish authorities, wishing to profit by this strange folly of a Frank, asked for another £3000 *baksheesh* in return for the honour that must accrue to a stranger who, at her own expense, proposed to provide their city with a supply of pure water. I am glad to say that, according to the story, the Baroness refused to submit to this imposition. Subsequently, after the pause common in the East, it was intimated to her that her original offer would be accepted. To this she is reported to have replied that she had now spent the money in building or endowing a church in England. As a result, Jerusalem remains, and is likely to remain, without any constant supply of drinking water.

Here it is the same in every case. A gentleman who is resident in the city told me that he had applied for leave to mend at his own expense a hole in the road running past his house. The answer was that he must pay

for the privilege. The Sultan, it was explained to him, could mend his own road if he liked, or, if it pleased his Imperial Wisdom, could leave it unmended. In the issue he left it unmended.

We drove out through the Jaffa Gate, past the Hill of Evil Council, where Caiaphas and his colleagues are said to have decided upon the destruction of the Saviour. On a ridge above stands a tortured-looking wind-bent tree, apparently an oak, to which Judas is reported to have hanged himself. In the account by Bishop Arculf, as taken down by Adaman, the Abbot of the Isle of Iona, upon which he was shipwrecked on his return from the East in the days of the Northumbrian king Alfred—that is, at the end of the seventh century—the Judas tree was shown upon much the same spot. Arculf, however, describes it as a large fig-tree, and that it is not still a fig I am unable to assert with confidence, for we did not go close enough to verify its species. Mandeville, 600 years later, speaks of it as an elder-tree, but Sir John can scarcely be counted as an authority on this or any other matter.

Further on we came to the little building that is shown as the tomb of Rachel, of which the site at any rate appears to have been accepted for many centuries. Certainly she must have been buried very near by, for Jacob says in Genesis: "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem."

Leaving Bethlehem to be visited on our return, we drove to the Pools of Solomon. They are splendid reservoirs, three of them, lying one below the other, fed from the spring known as the Sealed Fountain and other sources. Of the three pools the first is the smallest, and the last, which is nearly two hundred yards long by fifty broad and sixteen deep, is the largest. I

am ignorant who built them, Solomon or another, but Pontius Pilate is said to have restored them, and once they fed Jerusalem with water. Now, as I have told, the conduit is broken, so the water runs no further than Bethlehem. Also I noticed that, like everything else in this land, the pools themselves are falling into disrepair. Thus the sluices connecting two of them, I think the first and second, are broken down, so that the water is forced to find its way by an overground channel of its own. Upon the day of our visit a furious gale was blowing which caused the waves to dash over the retaining wall of the pools, as though they had been born in the depths of a veritable sea. Studied from below the effect was very striking.

Near to the head of the first pool is a large castle-like building, as usual in ruins, said to have been erected 300 or 400 years ago as a protection against Arab tribes. I pushed the rough door aside and entered. In the gateway an old goose was sitting which hissed at me, and beyond were the ruins of many walls and chambers mixed up with an attempt at a muddy garden. Except for this goose the place was quite deserted.

From Solomon's Pools we drove to Bethlehem, now a crowded, narrow-streeted little town, for the most part inhabited by Christians. In front of the church of St. Mary, which covers the traditional and, as I believe, the undisputed spot of the Nativity of our Lord, is a large flagged space, bordered by tombs. Once the atrium of the church stood here, but this has long been destroyed. At present the front looks like a blank wall erected by many builders at many ages in many different materials, and subsequently buttressed up. Were it not for the little iron cross standing at the apex of the gable, none would guess the sacred character of the building beyond.

We passed in by a humble door that seems to strive to hide itself away in the shadow, the original main entrances having been bricked up in past days, I sup-

pose from fear of the Turks and Bedouins. Within is a majestic fane, reared by the Emperor Constantine in the year 330, and I believe in all essentials not greatly changed since his day, although amongst other restorations the roof was repaired in 1482, its materials being given by Edward IV. and Philip of Burgundy. The transept and apse of the basilica have been walled off during the last century, so that all the visitor sees as he comes in is the noble, naked nave and its aisles, supported by pillars each hewn from a single rock. This part of the building is remarkable for its disrepair and neglected aspect. None of the Christians seem to wish to beautify or preserve it, for the strange reason that it belongs to all the Christians. Latins, Greeks, Armenians, each have their share in it, and therefore individually will do nothing, lest they should benefit the property of their fellow-worshippers of another shade of faith. Such conduct and the constant bitter quarrels that break out between them here, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and everywhere throughout Palestine—what an example do they give to the Moslem who stands by and mocks at the mutual hates of these "Christian dogs"?

A gentleman in Jerusalem told me that not long ago he found a Turkish soldier on guard in some part of this church, where it was not usual for a sentry to be, and inquired of him why he was there. He pointed to a nail in the wall and replied—

"It is my duty to watch that nail."

Asked why, he explained that the Latins, or the Greeks, I forget which, had driven in the nail with a view of hanging a picture; that the rival sect had furiously objected, saying that it was an interference with their property, and wanted to pull out the nail. That thereupon the Turkish Government had intervened and set him to watch the nail and see that no picture was hung upon it, and that it was not pulled out. To allow the picture to be hung would

have been to admit the claims of those who drove in the nail; to allow it to be pulled out would have been to admit the claims of those who objected to the driving in of the nail. Therefore the nail must be preserved, and the picture must not be hung, and, to see that this was so, an armed sentry must watch day and night. For aught I know he may be watching still. At any rate the story is as instructive as it is true.

Very much the same state of affairs seems to have prevailed in the time of Felix Fabri, who tells us that the Greeks owned the choir, the Latins the cave of the Lord's Nativity, and the Armenians an altar at the place of the Three Kings' Offerings. Whether they all of them then owned the nave and aisles jointly, I do not know, although I gather that they did. This is what he says:—

"This church at Bethlehem is in its upper part profaned and desecrated, nor has it one single lamp in its upper part, neither in the choir nor in the nave nor in the chapels, but it stands like a barn without hay, an apothecary's shop without pots of drugs, or library without books; the precious pictures are dropping from the walls, and there is no one to restore them. Yet we are thankful that the body of the church is still standing."

Felix, who could be very credulous where Christian wonders are concerned, relates some strange and pleasing stories about this church. One of them is to the effect that the "Soldan" came to the Place of the Nativity to destroy it. The destruction commenced accordingly, but the Soldan, noting the excellence of the carved slabs, and of the columns, ordered that they should be removed to be put to other purposes. Then—"Oh! miracle and prodigy meet to be proclaimed among the faithful"—while the workmen were at the task under the eye of their master—

"Out of the unbroken, solid wall, which it seemed that even a needle could not pierce, there came forth a serpent of

wondrous size, who bent his head back against the wall, and gave a bite to the first marble slab, and split it with his fiery tongue."

Vires acquirit eundo—for, put upon his mettle by the smashing of these slabs, the said serpent leapt next into the chapel of the Three Kings, "ran along that highly-polished wall whereon not even a spider could plant its feet, split forty slabs in two and disappeared."

After this the reader will not marvel that the Soldan was astounded, and abandoning his predatory purposes, got out of the church as fast as he could go. The tracks of the serpent, however, which looked as though "hot irons had been held against the stones"—possibly they had, but this does not seem to have occurred to honest Felix—remained in his day. Indeed he informs us that "I beheld the traces of this miracle with great pleasure, and often looked curiously upon them with inward wonderment."

To return from wandering with the fascinating Felix. After admiring the nave and aisles we passed into the transept and apse, where we saw the gorgeous altars of the various sects, and alongside the Latin church of St. Catherine. Then we went down some steps into the chapel of the Nativity. It is lighted by many lamps, of a good size and marble-lined throughout. Beneath an altar, a plain silver star is let into the pavement, and with it the inscription *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.*

This, according to all traditions, is I believe the holy and undisputed spot of the birth of the Saviour upon earth. It is best not to attempt to record the reflections to which the sight of it gives rise; each reader can guess them for himself. Close at hand, at the foot of a few steps, is a kind of trench lined with marble, said to be the site of the manger in which the Lord was laid, the original (of course discovered by the Empress Helena) having

been despatched to Rome. If the one spot is authentic, so doubtless is the other, but I could wish that both of them had been left with a little less of ornamentation and marble linings. This remark, however, applies to almost every holy site in Palestine, except that of which I have spoken, of the Transfiguration upon Mount Tabor, and one other place, not in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which I hope to describe presently, where, as I believe, Christ was crucified.

Afterwards we visited more underground caverns, such as the Chapel of the Innocents, where some of them are said to have been massacred or buried, I am not sure which, and the chapel cut in the rock where St. Jerome lived for many years and wrote his works. Then I returned alone to the Chapel of the Nativity, which I was so fortunate as as to find quite empty, and stood there awhile, listening to the solemn, swelling sound of the chanting monks as they marched from shrine to shrine through the various caves and passages of the crypt.

Outside of the church a gang of mother-of-pearl vendors and other folk who desired to beg or to sell something, threw themselves upon us furiously, clamouring, beseeching, and pestering, till we were driven almost mad with their importunities. This is one of the most persistent troubles that the traveller must expect in the Holy Land. He visits some sacred spot which he has longed to see from childhood, and no sooner is he without its doors than a crowd of impudent scamps, to whom the traditions of that place are a daily revenue, fall upon him and disturb his mind and temper.

However, we got rid of all of them at last—except one little girl, who simply declined to be driven away—and walked to a high crest on the outskirts of the town, whence we saw the wide plain that runs to the Dead Sea, and is bounded by the mountains of Moab. Below us, enclosed by a wall, lay that olive garden where the angel is said to have visited the "shepherds abiding in the field

keeping watch over their flock by night," and to have given them the "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," while above the Heavenly multitude gave "glory to God in the highest and on earth peace."

Thence breaking through the ranks of the mother-of-pearl sellers, who now made their last desperate attack, we drove to David's Well. It was from this well, when the Philistines held his city of Bethlehem, that David longed for water. "Oh! that one would give me drink of the water of Bethlehem which is by the gate." Then the three mighty men found a path through the hosts of the Philistines and drew water from the well and brought it to their prince. But David "poured it out unto the Lord," saying, "Shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?"

I suppose that the well shown by the gate is the same, but, if so, I do not think, however thirsty he might be, that David would wish to drink of its water to-day, since all the surface drainage of the garden finds its way into it; as by kneeling and looking down the well I was able to discover. When questioned the priest in charge could give no explanation. He only said that it had always been so.

Leaving this mystery unsolved, we drove back to Jerusalem. On our way we passed the field that was bought to bury strangers in with the price of the thirty pieces of betrayal, and that grim and desolate valley—once the scene of the abomination of heathen worship—which during the last 1500 years has received the bones of so many of those travellers to whom Jerusalem has proved the place of their last pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XX

JERICHO, THE DEAD SEA, BETHANY, AND SOLOMON'S QUARRIES

THE weather was still very cold and rainy on the morning that we started from Jerusalem to visit Jordan, Jericho, and the Dead Sea. Leaving at about eight o'clock, we crossed the head of the Valley of the Kedron and drove to the cave on the Mount of Olives, now an underground chapel, which is said to contain the tomb of the Virgin, the tomb of her parents, the tomb of Joseph, and the grotto where the last scene of the Agony is reported to have fallen upon our Lord while His disciples slept around. These different sacred spots are in the possession of the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Abyssinians, each of those sects having an altar here. Also there is a place of prayer reserved to the Mahommedans. It is needless to add that here, as elsewhere, the various Foundations indulge in their scandalous and discreditable rivalry. The church lies many feet underground, and is approached by a broad flight of marble steps, so ill-lighted that the visitor will do well if he proceeds like a blind man, tapping in front of him with a stick.

On this morning the crowd and the confusion were great, for up and down the steps poured two conflicting streams of hundreds of Russian pilgrims, perspiring and malodorous, amongst whom we struggled in the gloom. At their foot a somewhat mercenary monk provided us with tapers, by the light of which we inspected the tomb of the Virgin. It is covered with a marble slab, worn perfectly smooth by the lips of pilgrims. These good people, and

especially the Russians, think it their duty to kiss every object of acknowledged or reputed sanctity. I have seen them kneeling on the road kissing the ground, standing against walls kissing the stones, and bowing themselves to kiss the thresholds or the doors of buildings.

Owing to the multitude which surged to and fro, the sound of the singing of the mass (I think, at two altars), the smoke of the burning tapers, and the thick atmosphere arising from the presence in that airless place of so many pious but unwashen persons, our visit was disturbed and unsatisfactory. Indeed I was glad when we had struggled up the steps again and found ourselves in the cold, refreshing air.

Next we walked to the Garden of Gethsemane, a spot the identity of which seems never to have been doubted. It is the property of the Franciscans, and enclosed by a wall rendered as hideous as may be with stucco and bad pictures, although, fortunately, the existence of the olives has made it impossible for any one to cover it with a roof. Within the wall is a garden, and within that garden the true wonder of the place — eight olive trunks, still living but of a vast antiquity, here and there built up with stones to support them. So ancient are these decaying trees that, taking into consideration the longevity of the olive, it seems to me possible, and even probable, that amongst them, or others which sprang from the same roots, the Saviour did indeed pray and suffer. Yet they still push their leaves in spring and bear their fruit in autumn.

Preceding and following us round the enclosure were many more Russian pilgrims. I observed them closely, and noted that none of them seemed to look at or pay attention to the sacred spot of ground, or to the gaunt and hollow olives that grow within. At intervals on the wall, however, are placed vile representations in plaster relief of various scenes connected with the Passion.

These are covered with iron gratings, and the pilgrims as they went stopped before each grating and kissed its bars. It is impossible to watch these people without sympathy and respect; still it does appear almost piteous that they should pay so much attention to the outward and visible side of things, since this cannot but militate against a true appreciation of the inward and spiritual. Yet their motive is pure and good, and for the rest, who has a right to judge?

Shortly after leaving the Garden of Gethsemane we found our mounted Bedouin escort waiting for us by the roadside. Nothing that I saw in the demeanour of any of the inhabitants of the Dead Sea region, leads me to suppose that the presence of guards was a necessity. But there they are, and no traveller seems to be allowed to go to Jericho without them. Possibly this is to be explained by the fact that they are well paid for their services, and, in addition, receive a *baksheesh* from the object of their protective attentions. Possibly also, if they were no longer employed, as they themselves vigorously assert would be the case, accidents might overtake the pilgrim. Without being uncharitable, I can conceive even that they, or some of them, might be intimately concerned in those accidents. If a respectable Bedouin guard has his means of livelihood taken away from him, who could wonder if he should again relapse into the unregenerate state of a disreputable Bedouin thief?

A little further on, situated upon a hillside to our right, in the midst of several caverns that have, I suppose, served as tombs, we saw the slaughterhouse of Jerusalem, with the butchers at their horrid work in the full sight of passers-by, and the flocks of sheep and other animals waiting their turn. It was a most unpleasant spectacle.

Next we passed through Bethany, without stopping, as we were to visit it on our return, and at length

came to the spot which is fabled to be the scene spoken of by our Lord in the parable of the Good Samaritan and the traveller who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves. Here we rested the horses awhile, as the road, which, for a wonder, had not been made for the German Emperor, was steep and slippery after the rain, although it is the best in Palestine, and, indeed, by no means bad, considering the engineering difficulties that must have been overcome in its construction.

After leaving this Khan Hadrur the landscape as we drove became even more lonesome and extraordinarily wild. It is impossible to describe it better than by saying that it reminded me of the mountains of the moon as seen through a telescope. White, arid, unpeopled, with towering cliffs and vast rain-cut gullies, covered with round and stunted bushes showing like green warts on the face of the hills, uncultivated and uncultivable, the home of hawks and ravens, and here and there of a few wandering goats, that make little beaten tracks upon the mountain sides, it is the very ideal of desolation, a wilderness of wildernesses. At the bottom of a precipitous, yawning gulf runs the brook Cherith. Here, built half-way up the towering cliff, to which it clings like a swallow's nest upon a wall, is a Greek monastery that, as I am informed, marks the site of the cave in which Elijah was fed by the ravens. Of this monastery David, our dragoman, told me a curious tale. He said that once when he visited the place an old monk there took him out to the mountain-side, carrying in his hand a basket of crumbs and other food. Here, leaving David at a little distance, he stood still and whistled, whereon all sorts of birds, wild doves and many others, emerged from the cliffs and brushwood, and, after fluttering round, settled on the old man's head and shoulders while he fed them from his hand. Surely upon this

monk must have fallen the mantle of sweet St. Francis of Assisi.

Now we began to descend precipitous slopes till the plain of Jericho lay before us, a great expanse sprinkled with thorn-scrub and backed by the mountains of Moab. Unfortunately for the most part it was draped in mist and clouds, which hid the Dead Sea and blurred the outline of the hills. Passing through Jericho, a horribly foul village, where the population are said to be all thieves and most of the children seemed diseased, we drove on to the mounds which are reported to mark the site of the ancient city, whose walls fell down at the sound of the trumpet. As these mounds are distinct and isolated, however, it seems quite possible that they cover the ruins of outlying towers and fortifications.

Then we visited a fine pool of fresh water, which we were informed is fed by the spring that from bitter was made sweet by the prophet Elisha. After this we drove back to the village and our hotel through flat level land, which evidently is very fertile wherever it is reached and irrigated by the waters of Elisha's pool.

We had left Jerusalem in bitter cold, but here, although it was still early in the season, the air was hot and sultry, hotter even than at Tiberias. It is easy to imagine that after their long wanderings amongst sand and rocky deserts, this valley of Jordan, probably then in a high state of cultivation, with the greater part of its rich soil irrigated from the river and other sources by the industrious heathen husbandmen, would have appeared to the Jews as a veritable Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. Personally, however, it is not a climate in which I should care to live; indeed, what between heat and mosquitoes, most Europeans find it impossible in summer.

View on the Road to Jericho

The only House by the Dead Sea

The road, or rather track, from Jericho to the Dead Sea is bad in spots, especially at certain steep bits where it crosses streams, or nullahs. It is, however, wonderful what obstacles a Jerusalem rattle-trap will negotiate in safety. No English driver would dream of taking his carriage down such places. The trail runs across an arid plain impregnated with salt and bearing a scanty vegetation. Here and there among the bushes bloom ranunculi, while little iris of a peculiarly deep and lovely hue are common. Also many great, eagle-like birds—I imagine they are a kind of kite, though what they all find to live on I cannot quite understand—flit solemnly from thorn to thorn, while porcupines burrow in the sand.

Every one, at Sunday-school or elsewhere, has learnt what there is to learn about the Dead Sea. They know how it receives between six and seven million tons of water daily and evaporates as much or more; how it has no outlet, is over 1000 feet deep, and nearly 3000 feet below the level of the Mediterranean; how its waters are so salt that it is difficult to sink in them, and contain nothing that has life, except the bacillus of tetanus, a germ not easily defeated. All have heard also how it is full of asphalt such as is supposed to cover the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah, and how people who bathe in it must rush to the Jordan for a fresh-water dip lest their clothes should stick to their skins. I will, therefore, pass over these with other details, and attempt only to describe the Dead Sea, as I saw that wonderful lake.

Leaving my companions, I walked away alone past the only house upon these shores, a naked framework of poles that once had been covered with rushes to give shelter in bad weather to travellers from Jericho. This habitation and its surroundings seem singularly appropriate to each other. At a distance I stopped and sat down to look. Before me stretched miles and miles

of sea, one great sheet of smooth grey water, breaking into little oily waves beneath the wind. On its margin, like a fringe of skeletons, lay a long unvarying line of dead, white trees, some with the broken boughs still on them, and fantastic, projecting roots mingled with masses of peeled brushwood, all of it débris brought down by Jordan in times of flood. On either side were spread the misty mountains; to the right Râs-el-Feshkha and Râs Mersed, ending in the wilderness of Engedi; to the left the ravines of Zerkâ Mâ'in. There they towered, distorted, barren, desolate, finishing leagues away, far off, and faintly seen in two giant, embracing arms.

I rose and looked back. Behind me stretched the wide, arid plain, clothed with a scant and thorny vegetation, dying and ash-coloured, but tipped here and there with an unwholesome arsenic green. Bordering it were fortress-like sandy mounts, fashioned and denuded by æons of sun and storm. Beyond those again a vast parapet of tortured hills that might have been scooped and pointed as they came white-hot from the womb of the world, where the furnace-blasts are hurricanes, to be thrown hissing into a bath of ice, and fixed to eternal stone. Then, yet further off for the last black background, a hanging veil of storm.

I turned again and looked up. A distant gull travelled across the foodless water where he might not stay, and a wild duck passed like an arrow towards Jordan. There was no other life. Above me spread a dull sky, broken by mountains of massed clouds, and between them little valley-rifts of blue through which the sun shone rarely. Then rain-bearing mist blotted the peaks of Moab, and hid from my sight Nebo, whence Moses once beheld this very scene.

The Jordan, or those pools of it which we visited, lies three or four miles from the banks of the Dead Sea. The track thither meanders over flats of half-dried mire

through which the horses struggle as best they may, their drivers carrying with them logs of wood that they pick up upon the shores of the sea, to set beneath the wheels in the worst of the mud-holes.

At this season of the year, and in contrast to the desert round about, the banks of swift and muddy Jordan are lovely and refreshing to the eye, with their dense growth of willows, poplars, and tarfa trees clad in the vivid green of new-come foliage. Reed birds were to be seen also, and flashing past us one of those lovely halcyons that I noted on the Sea of Galilee.

We were told that a baptism was about to be celebrated in the waters of Jordan, the candidate being an American lady already past middle age. I doubted the story, but sure enough from the boat which I had hired in order to row up the stream we saw the party, consisting of a Greek priest in his tall hat, a native woman with a bath towel, or some garment that resembled it, and the candidate, all looking perplexedly at each other upon the reedy brink of Jordan. We then learned that the baptism was to be by immersion, so I thought it time to direct the boatman to move on.

We finished our row, and returned, but things did not seem to be much advanced. There was the perplexed-looking priest, there the woman with the mysterious garment, and there the candidate sitting disconsolate on the ground in a kind of a reedy bower. We landed, and were informed that the ceremony was to be delayed till after our departure, whereupon, of course, we hurried away.

Next morning we heard the conclusion of the matter from David, who had it from a brother dragoman who remained. It appears that the candidate wished to be baptized by total immersion. The Greek priest who had been retained for the occasion declined this method, saying that he did not immerse, and knew nothing about that ceremony. He offered, however, to baptize in

the ordinary fashion by the sign of the cross, but, so simple a rite being rejected as unsatisfactory, things came to a deadlock, which explained the perplexed air of all concerned when we left them. After our departure further argument ensued, but neither party could be moved.

Then it was when everything seemed hopeless that there happened what in past days would doubtless have been set down to miracle. Suddenly out of the reed and willow swamps of Jordan issued a Baptist minister, who, so we were informed, without warning of the proposed rite or acquaintance with the candidate, chanced to be on the spot, and, with a fine professional instinct, had hidden himself up to await developments. At the psychological moment he emerged and offered his services. The Greek priest was paid off and departed, the providential minister (all according to David) robed himself in the mat from the bottom of a carriage, and entered the river, where the lady joined him suitably arrayed, and, clinging to the side of the boat, for the current is swift and the water deep, everything was accomplished decently and in order.

I confess that to me this incident is full of mystery. First, how could it happen that a Christian lady of that age should not be already baptized? Can a person be baptized again whenever the spirit moves him? Further, is it permissible to an individual, presumably of the Baptist persuasion, to undergo this solemn rite as an incident in a tour to Jordan, and at the hands of a Greek priest as this lady had proposed to do? Lastly, there is the question of the substitute whom I saw, and—so deficient after much experience remains my judgment of men—did not recognise as a clergyman of any faith. Doubtless I was mistaken and he is a minister, possibly of high degree. Still, were I about to be baptized, I should like to make a few inquiries before I accepted that solemn office at the hands of a stranger appearing opportunely out of the reeds of Jordan. It is hardly necessary

for me to add that I do not tell this story with the idea of jesting at the person concerned, who has a right like the rest of us to carry out her religious aspirations in such fashion as seems best to her, but rather as a curious example of enthusiasm triumphant in spite of obstacles.

Brother Felix has much to say about the Jordan, and, amongst other things, deals with this matter of baptism as it appeared to him over four hundred years ago. It seems that then a superstition existed, and for aught I know exists to this day, that those who are baptized in Jordan "will never thereafter grow old; and this is why they make such efforts to get to the Jordan and baptize one another." He instances the case of some ladies of his own party "who bathed among the reeds above us with modesty, silence, and devotion, and far more sedately than we. I could have wished," he adds, "in the case of these old women, that the common report might prove true; for the people say that whosoever bathes in Jordan does not grow any older, but that the longer he remains in the water, the younger he grows; for instance, if he bathes for one hour, he grows younger by one hour; if for two, he grows younger by two; if three, by three; if for a year, he grows younger by a year. But our women comrades would have needed a bath of sixty years to restore their youth; for they were women of eighty years and upwards."

It is something of a shock to the reader to find that Brother Felix had any eyes to see how old or young were the ladies in whose company he travelled, and should even allow himself to express a preference for the latter state in woman. But Felix was very much of a man after all, although, as I judge, an exceedingly good one according to his lights.

He tells also some curious stories about the sudden terror which, it appears, frequently overtook pilgrims who had swum across Jordan, when it became necessary for

them to return. The task, I may observe, does not look difficult, and, if I had been acquainted with the pages of Felix before visiting the place, I should have liked to make trial of it notwithstanding the current. He mentions one of his companions, however, a strong swimmer, who was very nearly drowned here, and who alleged afterwards that when he was come to the middle of Jordan something beneath the water touched him, and "I was so much frightened by its touch that I lost all the strength of my limbs, and could not help myself either with my legs or my arms." Two of the company made a second attempt, supporting this man between them, whereon at the same place he began to sink, dragged them down with him, and was with difficulty rescued. Ultimately a Saracen, mounted on a strong horse, crossed Jordan at a ford a long way off and brought him back safe thereby. The pilgrim, we are informed, "gave him much gold for the price of his life." The adventure wrought a sad change in the poor man, however, since he who was handsome, "lusty, overbearing, and quarrelsome, and disliked by many of his fellows," became, after his return from Jordan, "pale-faced, timorous, humble, and slavish." Felix adds that he remained sorrowful and cast down, and, as he believed, died before long. He says also that he himself, when swimming in Jordan, was smitten with fear, but got back safely, and that a great friend of his suddenly lost all his strength in the middle of the river and was barely saved alive.

Afterwards he discusses the cause of this phenomenon, which he declares was the common experience of all pilgrims, whether it was brought about by "certain unnatural and hellish beasts who swim up from the Dead Sea to bring men to their deaths," or by strong imagination. Finally, he seems to favour a third interpretation—that it is a punishment from Heaven, "because swimming across is a sign of wantonness and dissoluteness," and the Jordan is a place "for weeping, not for laughing; for prayer, not for

shouting; for kneeling, not for struggling; for repentance, not for wantonness."

To this day, so far as my observation goes, such must, properly no doubt, be the general thought with reference to the Holy Land. As a result, there the traveller sees little that is bright or joyous. I hardly remember noting a young and charming face, or even a pretty dress. Youth flees that land; it shrinks from wandering where are no daily common pleasures, nothing but solemn sights and painful memories, which call up meditations oppressive to the spring of life. Palestine above all other countries seems the place of pilgrimage of folk on the wrong side of middle age, whose interests and ambitions have ceased to be solely, or even in the main, occupied with the anticipation of what good fortunes may befall them during the unspent days of their earthly sojourning.

Be this as it may, the only sweet and cheerful things in the Holy Land, where even the native children for the most part appear so grave, are the lovely flowers which for a time smile upon its face, soon to be burnt up and vanish. Amid those sterile hills and rotting ruins these lilies of the field suggest to the mind the presence of a spirit of promise eternally renewed although fulfilment may be far, and of a hope that never dies, though it may wither almost to its root in the searing winds of doubt and the long, undewed season of the heart's thirst and trial.

Felix mentions another superstition of which it would be interesting to learn whether any traces remain to this day. Myself I have heard of none, although now, as of old, pilgrims bring jars to the Jordan and fill them with its water. It is that ships on board of which such water was carried were always unlucky. He tells from his own experience that whenever they were in any danger at sea, the pilots ran about the vessel searching all the belongings of the pilgrims for this water, threatening to throw overboard those who carried it with their baggage. He says,

too, that he had endured much through being thus "insolently" searched, and adds that a papal bull was to be seen at Rome forbidding the importation of Jordan water "on pain of the curse of the Pope." This malediction Felix supposes to have been issued in order to put a stop to superstitions connected with the use of Jordan water for baptismal purposes. But were mediæval popes wont thus to war against such superstitions?

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Dead Sea the mosquitoes were very troublesome; indeed, it was necessary to smoke with vigour, and keep a handkerchief moving about the head as a protection against their venomous attacks. They did not, however, attack us by night in Jericho, although, I believe, that here also, a little later in the year, they are a perfect scourge.

The morning that we left the valley of Jordan proved very hot. Unfortunately, also, the view from the heights above, as on the day of our arrival, was obscured by dense streaming mists that lay like a white veil upon the low lands and the opposing border line of mountains, although the point of the precipitous Quarantana soared above them. This hill, which I did not climb, is said, upon no ground that I can discover, to have been the scene of the Temptation, and because of the sanctity attaching to it on this account, was for many generations inhabited by anchorites like those of Tabor who lived there in huts and caves.

At a place called the Apostle's Well we left our conveyance and walked by a steep mountain track to the village of Bethany. This path, I believe, follows the line of the old road, that which the Saviour must have travelled when He went down to Jordan to be baptized. Reaching Bethany we were shown the tomb of Lazarus, which is said to be the only cave in the place, that, notwithstanding its pretty site overlooking a little valley, and the fertility of its soil, seems to-day a very un-

populated village. At the least a great number of the houses are unroofed and ruined.

Entering by a low rock-cut door, we lit tapers and descended about twenty worn and broken steps which brought us to a kind of ante-chamber or chapel. Hence about five more steps, which appear at some time to have been covered in with a slab, brought us to the tomb itself. Supposing this to be the true site, whereof there is no proof, it would have been easy for the Saviour to stand in the ante-chamber, and after the stone had been moved, to call the words: "Lazarus, come forth!" down the remaining steps by which it is separated from the grave. But as to the exact locality none can speak with sureness, although it cannot have been far away.

We visited also the ruins of the house of Mary and Martha. From the remnants of carved marbles and the fine quality of the stone used in its walls, I imagine that this dwelling must have belonged to some one of wealth and importance. Whether Martha or Mary ever crossed its threshold is a different matter; probably it was built in an after generation.

Between Bethany and Jerusalem once more we passed the slaughter-place. At this hour of the day there were no butchers and no victims, but the aspect of the spot was horrible. Bloated-looking pariah dogs slunk away from it to sleep in the shade, while on the dying olive-trees about sat scores of full-gorged kites. "Where the carcase is there shall the eagles be gathered together." As I gazed it was borne in upon my mind that thus must the courts of the Temple have appeared upon the morrow of the Roman massacre.

One of the most interesting of the many sights we saw after our return to Jerusalem was that of the ancient quarries, called of Solomon, whence he is said to have drawn the stone for the building of the Temple. I can well believe that this was so, and as the blocks were prepared in the bowels of the earth thus it came about that

no sound of saw or hammer could be heard above. Probably Herod and others after his day made use of them also, drawing the hewn stone up into the Temple area, since, although the present entry to the caves is not far from the Damascus gate, they are reported to extend to beneath the Harem enclosure.

Few travellers, or comparatively few, visit that gloomy place. Perhaps it was on this account, and because he was determined not to miss one of the rare chances which came his way, that the Turk in charge of the quarries, hearing that we desired to see them, did not wait for us to arrive, but appeared at the hotel to fetch us. He was a very strange-looking person, who gave us the idea of having lived for years underground, although, of course, the connection between his appearance and his office may have been accidental. Tall, thin, bandy-legged, and cadaverous, he was clothed in a rusty European overcoat and a bright red fez, above which, although it did not rain and there was little sun, he held up an enormous white umbrella. With his back bent and his head thrust forward beneath the umbrella, notwithstanding his limp and crooked legs, our guide threaded the crowded bazaars at a pace which I found it difficult to equal. But as the white umbrella always floated ahead, like the famed helmet of Navarre, there was no fear of losing him; indeed, not having been paid in advance certainly he would have guarded against any such catastrophe.

Opening a rickety door in the face of the rocky slope, old Troglodytes, to whom now added themselves certain myrmidons, produced long tapers which we lit. Then off he went again down the steep stones with the activity of a great black beetle, and after him we followed, till at length the doorway behind us became but a star of light that soon vanished altogether.

It was a strange and awesome place in which we found ourselves, a vast, many-branching cavern, filled with darkness and with silence, whereof the ends and recesses have

never been explored. The air clung thick and heavy, the heat was such as in the tropics precedes a hurricane; the only sounds came from the occasional dripping of water condensed upon the ragged roof and the echo of our footsteps, while in that breathless calm the tapers burnt steadily as stars. All about lay tumbled heaps of rock loosened centuries ago. Also there were many half-cut squares and rough hewn masses, embryo pillars perhaps never moved from the spot where they had fallen. The extent of these caves, now so fearfully still, but that must once have resounded with the voices and hammers of thousands of workmen, seems to be enormous, and their ramifications are endless. How our friend Troglodytes found his way about them was to me a marvel; certainly I should have been hopelessly lost within five minutes. But he scrambled on, waving the white umbrella, a tiny figure in that dwarfing vastness, and we scrambled after over thousands of tons of *débris*. Above us as we went hung threatening blocks of stone that seemed to be suspended from the roof, for wherever it was possible the ancient workmen detached them in such fashion that they fell down from above.

At length, having gone as far as was safe and the air could be breathed with any comfort, we turned, although at the time I was not aware of the fact, and ten minutes later once more saw the star of light shining at the door. In fact, I was quite glad to reach it, being hot and tired, soaked, too, with perspiration induced by the stifling closeness of the place. Moreover, the candles softened with the heat, and bent over the hand in a way that made them very difficult and uncomfortable to hold.

I should like to know all the history of those vaults. What tragedies may they not have witnessed during the many terrible sieges and sacks through which Jerusalem has passed! Often fugitives must have refuged here; often doubtless they perished here. Perhaps they were starved; perhaps these rugged walls have echoed to the

cries of massacre, and this darkness has been illumined with the red torches of Romans, or of Saracens, seeking their helpless prey even in the bowels of the earth. Perhaps, also—let us hope it—some more fortunate hid here until the danger was done with, and thence escaped to light and life again.

CHAPTER XXI

GORDON'S TOMB AND GOLGOTHA

ANOTHER place in Jerusalem, of which, so far as I am aware, the guide-books take no notice, but that to me was fascinating and suggestive, is the sepulchre known as Gordon's Tomb, with the garden whereby it is surrounded. This name has been given to the spot because that great and single-minded man General Gordon, when he was in Jerusalem, made it his custom to come here for prayer and meditation. As for the tomb I do not understand that he ever asserted it to be that in which the body of our Lord was laid, although he was inclined to believe this might be so. My information on the point, however, is of a hearsay order, gathered only from what was told me in Jerusalem.

This, at least, is sure, that if the true Calvary was where many believe it to have been, among them myself, on the traditional site of the Place of Stoning, of which I shall speak presently, few resting-places could have been more convenient for the entombment of the divine Body. Also the resemblance between this garden with its grave and those described in the Gospels is remarkable. It may be, however, that the facts that the place is still a garden, and that the tomb is much what it must have been when it was hollowed out so many, many centuries ago, give more weight to this similarity than the circumstances warrant.

Yet it would not be too much to say that here the scriptural description seems entirely fulfilled. The tomb is rock-hewn. It appears never to have been finished, for some of the surfaces have not been smoothed. It was

closed with a stone. When this stone was rolled away the disciples, Peter and John, by stooping down could have looked into the sepulchre and seen the linen clothes lie, perhaps upon the floor of the little ante-chamber. This tomb, too, was a family tomb, such as Joseph of Arimathea might well have made, with room in it for three bodies, one at the end as it were, and recessed, and two at right angles. Very well might these have served as seats, such as those on which Mary must have seen "two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."

Who can tell whether or no it is the very spot? But, if the true Calvary was just without the wall on the borders of the Mahommedan cemetery, as think Otto Thenius, General Gordon, Colonel Conder, Doctor Merrill, and many more, that spot cannot have been very far away. At least, the sight of it is a great support to the imagination. Such a garden there must have been, and such a tomb, even as we see them to-day. In such a place, through the darkness before the daylight, must have shone the countenance that was "like lightning" and the raiment that was "white as snow," for fear of which "the keepers did shake and become as dead men." Through just such a garden, dim and dewy, must the two Marys have crept in terror of the Jews, or perhaps of the Roman guard, coming to the mouth of the sepulchre as the first golden rays of morning pierced it with their level shafts. On such a little terrace as that above, after, in answer to the query of the Messengers, she had uttered the immortal words echoed since her day by so many millions of doubting hearts, that she wept, "because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him," the Magdalene might have turned to behold Him whom in the shadow she supposed to be the gardener. Up such steps she may have hurried at His summons, to be met by the solemn and mysterious rebuke, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father."

Who can say; but standing in that quiet garden with the rock-hewn sepulchre before me, it was easy to imagine that here and not elsewhere these dread mysteries were enacted. Also others have believed it in a past already distant. Over the centre niche, where would have lain the body of the Lord, some dead hand who lived in the crusading time, so said the custodian, has drawn a cross in red pigment, and on either side of it painted the Greek letters Alpha and Omega. This he would only have done, believing that here was the veritable tomb of Jesus. Of course, however, this circumstance proves nothing, and, although that cross is old, it may be later than the Crusaders.

I noted another curious and suggestive thing about this tomb. In the rock without, hollowed from its side, the Saracens or others cut mangers for the feeding of animals, some of which remain to this day. How strange if the manger which was connected with the place of the earthly birth of our Lord, should also thus have become connected with the place of His earthly burial. How strange, also, if here, neglected in this old garden, unvisited by the mass of pilgrims, undecked by any pompous shrine or monument, should be the true scene of the Resurrection, and not yonder beneath the dome on the gorgeous battle-ground of the warring sects.

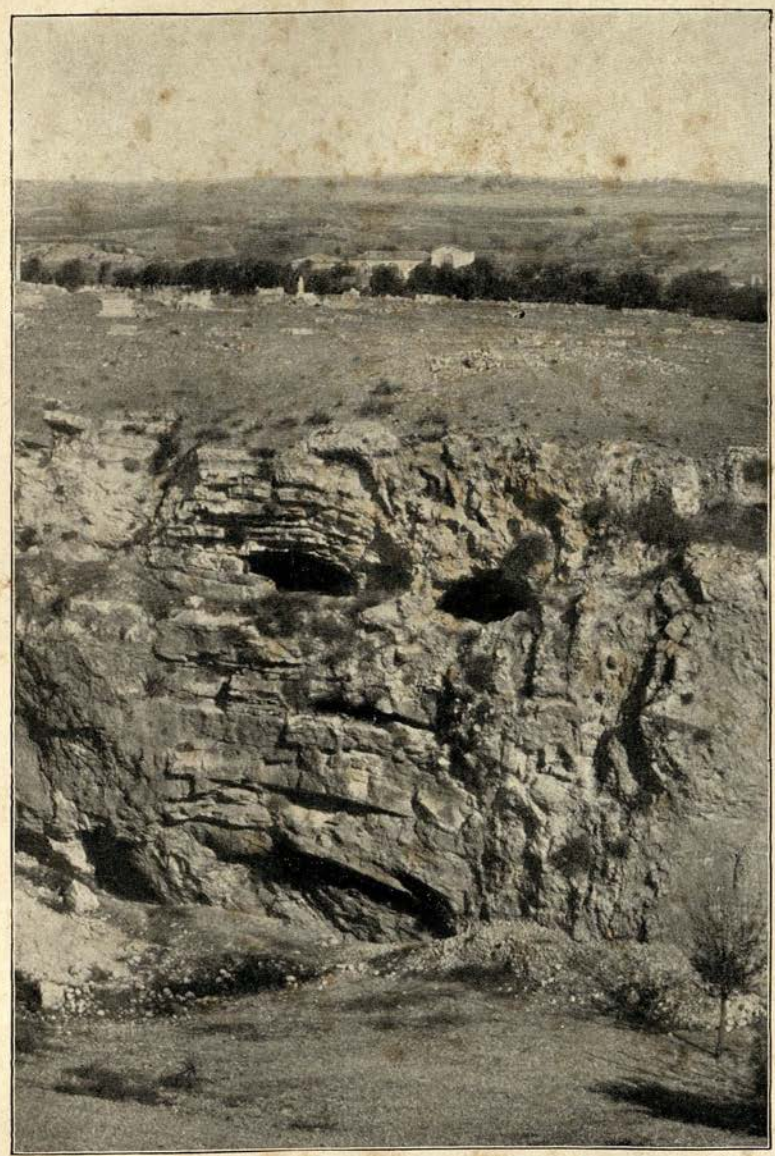
From this garden, perhaps so holy, though probably the truth of that matter will never be known, we went outside the walls to the traditional Place of Stoning, which is on a knoll in a Mahommedan cemetery north of the Damascus gate, and almost above the old cave that is called the Grotto of Jeremiah. Here it is that St. Stephen is said to have been stoned, although of late the site of his martyrdom has been shifted. On the edge of the knoll rises a sheer cliff forty or fifty feet in depth. I am told, although I have been unable to trace the genesis of the statement, that it was the habit of the Jews to throw condemned persons off the brink of this cliff, and then if any life was left in them to batter it out with stones. Here as it

chanced I myself was stoned, for in my hurry to look over the edge of the cliff, to me interesting for other reasons, inadvertently I stepped upon the pillar of an old Mahommedan tomb. Thereon a Moslem lady, one of a group who were seated in the sun basking and gossiping among the graves, hurled a lump of rock at me with considerable accuracy and force, helping it upon its flight with a volley of abuse. Instantly children appeared who also began to throw stones at the Christian "dogs"; but as we showed no concern, in time they ceased from their amusement.

Things in this respect seem to have changed little during five centuries. Felix Fabri cautions pilgrims to "beware of stepping over the sepulchres of the Saracens, because they are greatly vexed when they see this done, and pelt with stones any one who steps over them, because they believe that our passing over them torments and disturbs the dead."

The reason why I was so anxious to examine this place is that I believe it to be the actual site of the Crucifixion, and that here above the Damascus road, whence the passers-by looked up and mocked at the dying figure strained upon His cross, once the body of the Saviour hung through those hours of sun and darkness. What is more likely than that the Place of Stoning should also be the Place of Crucifixion, and what spot could be more suitable than this summit of a cliff, where all might see the sufferers of the death of shame?

It was outside of the city walls, yet near to the city. A man might bear his own cross there, since it seems no further from the Place of Judgment than is the Church of the Sepulchre. There is another point, to my mind one most suggestive. The Crucifixion ground, called Golgotha in the Hebrew and Calvaria in the Latin, whence comes our own Calvary, means in either language the Place of the Skull. All the evangelists give it this name. St. Matthew says, "a place called Golgotha, that is to say,



THE PLACE OF STONING

the place of the skull." St. Mark says, "the place called Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of the skull." St. Luke says, "the place which is called Calvary," in the Revised Version rendered "the place which is called the skull." St. John says, "a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha."

From such various testimony it may fairly be concluded that this execution-ground had something to do with a skull. It has been suggested that it was so called because skulls were left there, but then would it not have been called the Place of Skulls? Also is it not admitted that it was the Jewish habit to bury the bodies of malefactors, and not to leave them to rot upon the ground, as is the common custom of savages? If so, the skulls would not have remained in sight. Another suggestion is that the shape of the mound may have resembled that of a skull. But nowhere in the Bible is it stated that the Crucifixion took place upon a mount, although the idea that this was so has become general. All that is stated, all which is quite certain, is that it happened outside the walls of the city. Thus, to put aside other evidence, it is expressly said in the eleventh verse of the last chapter of St. Matthew that "some of the watch came *into the city*, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done."

Now, as it chances, on the cliff at this spot, believed to be the Place of Stoning, and by many that of the Crucifixion, the face of the rock, looking towards Jerusalem, has undoubtedly a fantastic, but, to my fancy, a very real resemblance to a rotting human skull. There is the low corroded forehead; there are two deep hollows that make the eyes; there is something which might be the remnant of a nose, and beneath, near to the ground level, a suggestion of twisted and decaying lips. I saw the likeness at once, but on the other hand my nephew who was with me could see nothing. In the same way three

people out of every four catch the resemblance in a photograph of the place which I brought home, whereas to the fourth on an average it is invisible. If two thousand years ago the face of that cliff was approximately as it appears to-day, may not some fanciful-minded Jew have caught this likeness and designated it on that account "The Place of the Skull"? If so, in view of its traditions and horrible use, the name would have been likely to cling to the site from age to age.

But was it the same? Have weather or the hand of man altered the appearance of the cliff? Who can say? For my part I believe that save in the case of strata of exceptional softness, a trifle of two thousand years will not make any great difference in the appearance of rock, especially in such a climate as that of this part of Palestine, where no severe frost comes to corrode and split the air-hardened stone. There remains the question of extra-natural interference. Men might have hollowed out those eye-holes. It is, however, difficult to see why they should have done so. The face is steep and not easy to come at. Enormous quarries exist within a few yards—those which I have already described—whence they could more easily have obtained building material. At least no extensive cuttings have been made, since the road seems to run where presumably it must always have run, between the cliff and the city wall.

This is the case, put briefly, but as clearly as I can set it out. It is not for an amateur like myself upon the strength of only two examinations, although these were careful, to be dogmatic or express any positive opinion, and I express none on this or other disputed sites and matters connected with the Holy Land. How can I, who, lacking an extended experience of these problems, must rely mainly upon my powers of observation and deduction such as they may be, to guide me to the truth? I only venture to point out, not knowing whether or no this has been done in works already

published, that, as I saw it in the year 1900, the surface of this cliff has a quaint and ghastly resemblance to a human skull. Taken in connection with the traditions of that place, with its undoubted suitability to the dread purposes of public death, and with the name by which the true spot was known, wherever it may have been, I submit that this resemblance is, to say the least, exceedingly suggestive.

If the inference is not a false one, if indeed the crosses of the Saviour and the thieves stood upon the summit of that little cliff, it would be a fact worthy of note that this patch of earth remains now just as it must have been in the long-dead Roman days. What a strange and bitter satire also would be involved in the circumstance that where the Christ gave up His soul is now a burying-place of the followers of the false prophet, in which the passing Christian of to-day is cursed and stoned. Here I leave the subject, adding only that on a subsequent study of this strange cliff from the roof of an opposing American school or mission within the walls, the skull-like likeness was, to my mind, even more apparent and striking than it had been when viewed from nearer points immediately beneath them.

Unless it be that which is to be seen from the platform of the Russian tower upon the Mount of Olives, I know of no better view of Jerusalem than can be had by climbing to the roof of the New Hotel, upon some night when the full moon clothes that ancient Holy City and its surrounding hills in a garment of shimmering silver. Studying it thence the traveller will understand how inconceivable it seems that the site of the present Church of the Sepulchre, by tradition the place of the Crucifixion, Entombment, and Resurrection, should ever have lain without the Roman walls. Even now the area enclosed within those of to-day is not much larger than that engirdled by the mediæval fortifications of Famagusta, the provincial town in Cyprus which I have described in a previous

chapter of this book. To cut away the portion which includes the Church of the Holy Sepulchre would reduce this small space by about a fourth, or even more. Now, allowing that the old town extended somewhat towards the south, as the excavations of Dr. Bliss and others on the foundations of the wall seem to prove, surely it would be impossible, if shorn of this section, that it could have contained anything like the numbers of people who are said to have found shelter within its gates. Whether it could have held them at all, indeed, whatever the exact line of the walls, seems more than doubtful. Josephus tells us ("Wars," book vii. chap. xvii., edition of 1785) that "in the war of which we are speaking, no less than 97,000 persons were made prisoners, and the number of those who lost their lives during its progress was 1,100,000."

In explanation of this vast total, he says that when Cestius caused a rough census of the Jews to be taken at the time of the Passover, it was reckoned that there were in Jerusalem "two million five hundred and fifty-six thousand persons, all of them in perfect health," which is a population nearly as great as that of Paris and its suburbs at the last census. No wonder he informs us that the multitude shut in by the siege was so immense "that the confined air occasioned a pestilence, and this calamity was soon followed by a famine." Yet he adds: "If the calculation of Cestius may be relied on, the city was quite large enough to have afforded accommodation to this amazing concourse of people." Was it? According to Colonel Conder, a great authority, the number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in ordinary times cannot at this period of the siege have been more than 30,000 (it is now about 60,000, and very crowded). To add to this modest total over 2,000,000 souls, and to assert that such a seething mass of humanity, pent within those narrow walls, endured a siege of 143 days, is to strain the credulity of modern investigators to breaking point. Surely Josephus must have exaggerated. But if we divide

his figures by five, supposing the ground on which is built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to have been without the wall in his day (as must have been the case if the Crucifixion took place there), it seems quite impossible that even the total thus diminished could have found room to move and fight, or roofs to shelter them from sun and rain.

This fact appears to me to constitute the best and most complete argument against the authenticity of the Church of the Sepulchre site, since all admit that the Crucifixion took place without and not within the city walls. The experts, however, can furnish other arguments. Thus, Dr. Merrill, who has studied the matter closely, and, I believe, himself carried out excavations, very kindly showed me the plan he had made of the foundations of the ancient walls, according to which the Holy Sepulchre site would be distinctly included within them. I gathered from him also that he believes the Crucifixion to have taken place at the spot which I have described already, and I think that he has marked it thus upon his plan. In his opinion the Saviour carried His cross from the Hall of Judgment, not by the narrow and twisting Via Dolorosa, but along a broad military road that ran to the Damascus gate and thence to Cæsarea.

On the other hand, for some fifteen centuries the Church of the Sepulchre has been accepted as the true site. Therefore, the vested interests, if I may call them so, in that site are considerable, and any attempt to dispute it is vigorously cold-shouldered by Greeks, Latins, Armenians, and Abyssinians alike. But when this tradition is examined it will be found a house without foundations. According to Eusebius, before the time of Constantine a temple of Venus, said to have been built by Hadrian, stood upon the site of the church. He appears to have thought also that the cave beneath was connected with the worship of this goddess. A vision induced the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, to undertake a pilgrimage to

Jerusalem. There another vision prompted her to destroy the temple of Venus and dig, whereon, "contrary to all expectation," the Tomb of the Lord was found beneath. Also she discovered the crosses upon which the Saviour and the good thief were executed, carefully buried away against the hour of her search. As no further vision came to explain which of these was the True Cross, this had to be determined by experiment. A lady sick to death was brought to the place, and when she was laid upon the genuine relic instantly recovered her health. Such, put concisely, seems to be the sum of the evidence in favour of the accepted site. The reader will judge of its value for himself.

If he is critically minded, however, it may occur to him as possible that when the Empress arrived and asked to be shown the notable places in Jerusalem, the Pagan inhabitants of that day took her to the ruined temple of Venus. Then might have come the visions already characteristic of this good woman, the purport of which would have been noised abroad. For the rest, is it wonderful that if a wealthy empress wishes and expects to find crosses by digging at a certain spot, crosses should, sure enough, be found?

Probably in Jerusalem then, as to-day, there existed enterprising people who appreciated money, and were not overburdened with scruples as to the manner of its winning. It is hardly necessary to dwell on the curious circumstance (supposing that they were not placed there ready to St. Helena's hand) that these crosses of scantling —for they could have been little more if one man was to carry them—should have been thus carefully preserved and have withstood the damp of the earth for over three centuries. Oddly enough, however, as Colonel Conder points out in his article on Jerusalem in the "Dictionary of the Bible" that is edited by Dr. Hastings, "the legend of Helena's miraculous discovery of the Cross is unnoticed by contemporary writers, though in A.D. 326 the

mother of Constantine visited Bethlehem and Olivet. The Cross itself is only noticed by St. Cyril twenty years after the great Basilica was built, and in A.D. 383 by Jerome. . . . The story of the finding of the Cross is first told by Rufinus in A.D. 410, and by Theodoret about A.D. 440."

Therefore it would seem possible that the whole of this marvellous tale may be a legend of a post-Constantine period. In such case nothing remains to guide us as to the reason of the building of the Basilica by Constantine at this particular spot. Possibly it was the discovery of the old rock graves, which since the sixteenth century have been asserted to have held the remains of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. This tomb of Nicodemus, by the way, Colonel Conder suggests, in the article from which I have already quoted, may have been hollowed for a very different purpose. "It is not impossible that this monument may be the real tomb of the kings, but it is also possible that all were buried near Siloam within the city walls; and future excavation may reveal 'the sepulchres of David' near Siloam."

Among the seas of uncertainty which surge round the sacred relics of Jerusalem it is refreshing to stand upon something that is beyond doubt, even if it be clearly connected with the events of Bible history. We visited the establishment of the Sisters of Zion twice, and on the second occasion saw everything that the place has to show. The good nuns are Russians, but, fortunately, the lady who conducted us could speak French. This church and convent abuts on the *Via Dolorosa* or Sorrowful Street, which here is spanned by an arch called that of the *Ecce Homo*, where, by tradition, Pilate produced the Saviour before the crowd, saying to them and to all the generations that were to follow, "Behold the man." Whether or no the event happened on this spot none can say, but Baedeker is of opinion that here are the remains

of a Roman triumphal arch that has been remodelled since the days of the Romans. In the choir of the church of the Sisters of Zion, however, is a smaller arch, which joined that spanning the street, and must at any rate be very old.

What admits of no question is the ancient pavement which is to be seen in the basement of the convent. This must date from the Roman days, and in all probability was trodden by our Lord. It is laid in large blocks, and one part of it, which is comparatively unworn, seems to have formed part of the flooring of a courtyard or square. Upon three of the slabs are lines and patterns that were evidently made use of in games played by the soldiers. These struck me as very similar to those which have recently been uncovered in the Forum of Rome, where I saw them on my journey to Cyprus. One of the Jerusalem slabs has little cups cut in it, which may have served some purpose in a game not unlike that of our modern marbles, still favoured by school children. Doubtless the guard gambled on this court while they awaited the result of the trial of prisoners in the judgment hall, thus whiling away the interval between their hours of duty.

Evidently the court ended and the line of the street began at a certain limit within the precincts of the convent, since in curious contrast to the smooth blocks, polished only by the constant passage of human feet, those immediately beyond can be seen to be much worn by the hoofs of horses. The sister told me also that beneath the vaults of the convent, underground passages have been discovered recently which run towards the temple enclosure, forming, doubtless, part of the system of the ancient fortifications of the city. These tunnels I was unable to inspect as they have been closed up, she said, owing to the bad air and damp that emanate from them.

On leaving this most interesting house of the

Sisters of Zion, we walked through the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, examining it more thoroughly than we had found time to do before. The dirt of the place is truly wonderful, and it is strange that human beings should live there in health through the scorching months of an Eastern summer. Still they do live, which speaks well for their innate vitality. The stamp of the inhabitants is much the same as that of the Jews of Tiberias, although here they are somewhat more virile in appearance. Also, their dress is better; in certain instances, indeed, it gave evidence of wealth and a kind of incongruous taste. Many of these Hebrews, I am told, like their brethren of Tiberias, live upon the charity of co-religionists in other lands.

Next to the filth of the streets I think that the beggars are one of the greatest annoyances to be met with in Jerusalem. At certain spots, and notably near the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, and outside the house of Caiaphas and the Gate of Zion, sit miserable creatures covered with sores, as Lazarus sat at the door of Dives, who utter without cease a low, unhappy wail. Now, too, as in the day of our Lord, lepers roll about the roadway, and exhibit their festering stumps. I saw none, however, with the skin "as white as snow" of the Bible, if indeed this form of the disease still exists. Their affliction seems to be of a kind which I have met with in South Africa, whereof one symptom is the dropping off of the fingers and toes at the joints.

Once I had a Kaffir servant who was a leper after this sort, an excellent man in every other way. But of that unfortunate this is not the place to write.

Another thorn in the flesh of the traveller, or rather other thorns, are the tradesfolk of Jerusalem. The moment that he emerges from his lodging these importunate persons rush at him as pike rush at a frog thrown into a pond, seeking to drag him into

their shops, and there digest him, or his cash, at leisure. At times the excess of their servile annoyance makes the temper, even of him who is experienced in wandering, a thing very difficult to keep. It is rumoured that after a course of it even blameless and teetotal Deans have been known to express irritation in terms which would have vexed their Chapters.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CHURCH OF THE SEPULCHRE

THE best time to examine the Church of the Sepulchre, which for ages past a vast majority of the pilgrims to Jerusalem have considered its greatest and most impressive sight, is so soon as the doors are open in the morning, before the swarms of Russians have begun to gather there. On the day of the visit which I am about to describe, fortunately for us, beyond a few isolated individuals, none of these appeared. Probably the rest of them were engaged *en masse* in travelling to Jordan or some other distant spot. Thus it came about that for a long while we were practically alone in the place, to us a great advantage.

This church, or rather the rotunda which preceded it, was built in the year 336. In 614—I cull the dates from Baedeker—the Persians destroyed it. About 620 it was rebuilt with additions. This was the church which Arculf saw in or about the year 700. He says of it in the course of a long description:—

"The church of the Holy Sepulchre is very large and round, encompassed with three walls, with a broad space between each, and containing three altars of wonderful workmanship in the middle wall, at three different points—on the south, on the north, on the west. It is supported by twelve stone columns of extraordinary magnitude; and it has eight doors or entrances through the three opposite walls, four fronting the north-east and four to the south-east. In the middle space of the inner circle is a round grotto cut in the solid rock, the interior of which is large enough to allow nine men to pray standing, and the roof

of which is about a foot and a half higher than a man of ordinary stature. The entrance is from the east side, and the whole of the exterior is covered with choice marble to the very top of the roof, which is adorned with gold, and supports a large golden cross. Within, on the north side, is the tomb of our Lord, hewn out of the same rock, seven feet in length, and rising three palms above the floor."

More than two centuries later fire twice did the place much damage, and in the year 1010 it was destroyed by the Moslems, to be reconstructed in 1075, and afterwards greatly added to by the Crusaders. In 1187 and 1244 the church was damaged or destroyed by various unbelievers. In 1310 it was rebuilt. In 1808 it was burnt down, to be raised up again as we see it now, in 1810. Such is the stormy and chequered history of this remarkable fane.

Formerly it had double doors facing south, with a considerable open space in front, but now one of these has been walled up. Passing through the other, almost the first object to be seen is the Stone of Anointment, whereon the body of Christ is supposed to have lain. It is not reassuring to the reverent traveller, especially if he chances never to have studied the subject for himself, and to believe that here was the unquestioned scene of our Lord's death and resurrection, to consult his faithful Baedeker, and to read therein that "the stone has often been changed." Yet even as he reads he may lift his eyes to see, as I did, two devout pilgrims, a man and a woman well on in years, with heaving breasts and tear-stained eyes, kneel down and kiss the relic with the utmost passion—that relic which "has often been changed."

Near by is another stone, where it is announced that the women stood while the anointing of the holy Body was in progress. A few steps, and we come to the rotunda beneath the great dome, in the centre of which stands the sepulchre, the reputed burial-place of Christ, containing a split slab of marble, where His body is said to have lain. Evidently, therefore, it has changed since the days of

Arculf, who told Adamnan that "This tomb is broad enough to hold one man lying on his back, and has a raised division in the stone to separate his legs." In the time of Felix Fabri, however, as now, it was "covered with a slab of polished white marble, on which mass can be celebrated." He says also:—

"This cave has no window, nor is there any light in it save what comes from nineteen lamps which burn in it, which lamps hang above the Lord's Sepulchre; and inasmuch as the cave is small, the fire of the lamps make a smoke and stench, which greatly troubles those who enter the place and remain therein."

Baedeker says that in the crusading days the Sepulchre sanctuary was round, with a round tower, but already separated into the Angels' Chapel and the actual burying-place as it is to-day. Afterwards it was polygonal, and in 1555 the nuisance which Felix notices was remedied by the piercing of holes in the roof to allow the smoke and smell to escape. To-day it is hexagonal in shape, and the pilgrim passes into the Sepulchre through the Angels' Chapel with its many lamps which belong to the different sects.

On one side of the Sepulchre, the north, if I remember right, is a curious opening in the marble not unlike that out of which the anchor chain runs in the bow of a steamer. Through this hole at the Feast of the Greek Easter is exhibited the miracle of the Holy Fire, which is said by the Greeks—the Latins refusing to participate in the fraud after the sixteenth century—to descend annually from heaven, for what exact purpose I have been unable to discover from any authority within my reach. However, when it has descended—or when the priest has struck a match inside the Sepulchre—he thrusts a lighted torch through the hole, from which some privileged person lights his lamp or candle. From this again others take the fire, fighting and screaming to be the first, and burning their breasts to show that these flames are harmless

till at last the whole vast space is starred with the light of thousands of tapers.

The "miracle" is of old standing. Colonel Conder says of it in the article to which I have referred already: "The strange festival of the Holy Fire seems to have perpetuated the pagan fire-feasts of earlier days—perhaps once celebrated at the same spot." However this may be, when Bernard the Wise, who is, I think, the first to mention it, visited the Sepulchre in 867 the custom was already established. He says: "I must not, however, omit to state that on Holy Saturday, which is the eve of Easter, the office is begun in the morning in this church, and after it is ended the Kyrie Eleison is chanted, until an angel comes and lights the lamps which hang over the aforesaid Sepulchre, of which light the patriarch gives their share to the bishops and to the rest of the people, that each may illuminate his own house."

It was because of this "miracle" that the Caliph Hakim is said to have destroyed the church in 1010. The Jacobite writer, Gregory Abulfaragius, the author of the "Universal History from the Creation," who must have written about 1270, says:—

"The author of this persecution (that of 1010) was some enemy of the Christians, who told Hakim that, when the Christians assembled in their temple at Jerusalem to celebrate Easter, the chaplains of the church, making use of a pious fraud, greased the chain of iron that held the lamp over the tomb with oil of balsam, and that when the Arab officer sealed up the door which led to the tomb, they applied a match through the roof to the other extremity of the chain, and the fire descended immediately to the wick of the lamp and lighted it. Then the worshippers burst into tears, and cried 'Kyrie Eleison,' supposing that it was fire from heaven that fell upon the tomb; and they were thus strengthened in their faith."

Really when he learnt the truth of the matter, it is not wonderful that in his turn the Caliph Hakim was

strengthened in his indignation against the Christian religion and the anointed cheats who practised such a fraud.

In the day of Felix Fabri it appears that the head priest was shut by the Greeks "into the Lord's monument with an unlighted candle, which he brings forth lighted with a loud cry, and from which all the lamps are lighted." But Felix, although credulous at times, was too sensible a man to be thus imposed upon. He says: "But it is not lighted by a miracle but artificially; albeit the ignorant mob raises its cries to heaven, praising God, as though a miracle had been wrought, and so they noise it abroad among the people, even among the Saracens." He goes on to tell how that the Saracens said that if this fire was really brought down from heaven and the Christians could prove it, they would be willing to be converted.

Felix narrates a fable, which he calls a "beautiful story," anent this fire. It is that when Narcissus, an ancient bishop of Jerusalem, was about to hold service on Easter eve his acolytes told him that there was no oil. But, being holy and believing and full of faith, he sent for water instead. When it came he blessed it, and filled the lamps. Then suddenly "by a wondrous power unheard of in any other age, the water took upon itself the fatness of oil, and being lighted from heaven, made the light of the lamp shine more brightly than it was wont to do."

This very curious event, which chanced under the Emperor Severus 211 years before the day of Constantine, was, it is suggested, the beginning of the miracle, which thereafter repeated itself annually.

As may be imagined, this yearly wonder happening in a crowded church—I believe that 6000 people can press into the space beneath the dome, although at the time of writing I am unable to find an authority for the statement—is not unattended with danger. In 1834,

indeed, a fearful catastrophe occurred, of which, fortunately, we have an account in "Visits to Monasteries in the Levant." The late Hon. Robert Curzon, jun., the author of this interesting work, was travelling in the Holy Land, and chanced to be present in the church upon that dreadful occasion. He tells how "the patriarch was carried out of the Sepulchre in triumph, on the shoulders of the people he had deceived," and how, overcome by the smoke and smell, three unhappy wretches "fell from the upper range of galleries, and were dashed to pieces on the heads of the people below," an Armenian girl dying in her place merely of heat and fatigue.

Afterwards Mr. Curzon and his party set out to return to the convent where they were lodging, the soldiers of their escort making a way for them. When he reached the station traditionally occupied by the Virgin during the Crucifixion he saw a number of people lying on the floor of the church. At first he thought that they were resting, but at length coming to a great pile of them perceived that these were dead bodies. Now I must quote, since nothing can give a better idea of this fearful event than the words of the eye-witness who describes its details. Many of those whom he took to be peaceful sleepers were he found "quite black with suffocation, and farther on were others all bloody and covered with the brains and entrails of those who had been trodden to pieces by the crowd. At this time there was no crowd in this part of the church; but a little farther on, round the corner towards the great door, the people, who were quite panic-struck, continued to press forward, and every one was doing his utmost to escape. The guards, outside, frightened at the rush from within, thought that the Christians wished to attack them, and the confusion soon grew into a battle. The soldiers with their bayonets killed numbers of fainting wretches, and the walls were spattered with blood and brains of men who had been felled, like oxen, with the butt-ends of the soldiers' muskets. Every one struggled to defend himself

or to get away, and in the mêlée all who fell were immediately trampled to death by the rest. So desperate and savage did the fight become that even the panic-struck and frightened pilgrims appear at last to have been more intent upon the destruction of each other than desirous to save themselves."

Mr. Curzon then tells of his own fight for life, and of his hideous struggle with one of the Pasha Ibrahim's colonels, whom in the end he overthrew. The officer died where he fell, but Mr. Curzon found his legs again, and succeeded in winning his way back to the sacristy of the Catholics, and thence to the room adjoining the church, which had been assigned to him by the monks. He says "the dead were lying in heaps, even upon the stone of unction; and I saw full 400 wretched people, dead and living, heaped promiscuously one upon another, in some places above five feet high."

The site of the church of the Holy Sepulchre has witnessed many tragedies during the last fifteen centuries, but few of them can have been more terrible than that of sixty-five years ago, which Mr. Curzon describes. Yet from Easter to Easter still "the miracle" goes on.

Here I must explain, for the benefit of those readers who may be unacquainted with the conditions which prevail at Jerusalem, that this church of the Sepulchre is the joint possession of various Christian sects, who have held their rites in it for many ages. In or about the year 1342 the traveller Bertrandon de la Brocquière, lord of Vieux-Château, writes: "In the church of the Holy Sepulchre reside also many other sorts of Christians, Jacobites, Armenians, Abyssinians, from the country of Prester-John, and Christians of the girdle."

To come to a later age, we have evidence on the point from the pen of the Rev. Henry Maundrell, who was elected chaplain of their Aleppo factory by the company of Levant merchants in 1695, and who died while still a young man at Aleppo in 1701. In the interval he visited

Jerusalem and wrote an interesting and valuable account of what he saw. Speaking of the church of the Holy Sepulchre he says that "in these places almost every Christian nation anciently maintained a small society of monks, each society having its proper quarter assigned to it by appointment of the Turk, such as the Latins, Greeks, Syrians, Armenians, Abyssinians, Georgians, Nestorians, Coptites, Maronites, &c." In his age, however, most of these communities had been taxed out by the oppressions of the Turks, so that only the Latins, Greeks, Armenians, and Coptites were left. As in our time, each of these fraternities had its own altars and sanctuaries, where they possessed the right of celebrating their services to the exclusion of all others. He continues:—

"But that which has always been the great prize contended for by the several sects is the command and appropriation of the Holy Sepulchre, a privilege contested with so much unchristian fury and animosity, especially between the Greeks and Latins, that, in disputing which party should go into it to celebrate their mass, they have sometimes proceeded to blows and wounds even at the very door of the sepulchre, mingling their own blood with the sacrifices, an evidence of which fury the father guardian showed us in a great scar upon his arm, which he told us was the mark of a wound given him by a sturdy Greek priest in one of these unholy wars. Who can expect ever to see these holy places rescued from the hands of infidels? Or, if they should be recovered, what deplorable contests might be expected to follow about them, seeing, even in their present state of captivity, they are made the occasion of such unchristian rage and animosity?"

If the actual conflicts described by Maundrell have ceased, the spirit of them remains, and well may we echo the questions which conclude his remarks. The quarrels of the Christian sects are the object of the continual wonderment and mockery of the Moslem masters of the holy places, whose business it is to criticise and control them.

I imagine that few visitors who care to take the trouble to think, even if they have never questioned the authenticity of the site, can return faith-whole from an inspection of the Holy Sepulchre. The monks of various persuasions and different periods have made the mistake of leaving nothing to the imagination. Thus, in addition to about a dozen chapels dedicated to sundry saints and supposed to be connected with them in this way and in that, and to the great Greek cathedral, the Catholicon—in itself a fine building, but to my taste much marred by its profuse and tawdry ornamentation—there are many other sacred spots, each of them fixed to a hair's breadth.

Thus we have the Centre of the World accurately, if unscientifically determined, and the place of the burial of the skull of Adam, who was constructed of clay taken from this locality. Then we see the Mount of Calvary—the reader will remember, by the way, as I have pointed out, that nowhere in the Bible is it said that Calvary was on a mount — beneath which Adam was interred, until the Blood, flowing from the Cross, brought him to life again. Melchisedec, too, was buried here, and the socket made for the Cross in the rock has been carefully preserved, and is now lined with silver. Also the pilgrim is shown — and, if he is a Russian, kisses the place—where stood the crosses of the two thieves. Next there is an underground chapel called that of St. Helena, where the Cross was found. Near the altar, too, is a seat in which the Empress Helena sat while the Cross was unearthed. Unfortunately for the genuineness of this relic, as the cold-blooded Baedeker points out, an Armenian patriarch of the seventeenth century, complained in his day that he had frequently been obliged to renew this seat because the piety of pilgrims led them to bear it away piecemeal. He adds, does the sceptic Baedeker, "Some explorers regard this chapel as part of the ancient city moat."

To this day pilgrims play the same pranks as poor Father Barnabé told me of on Mount Tabor almost with tears; indeed, if left alone, they would carry off the whole place. In this chapel of St. Helena, and on the staircase leading to it, I saw names scribbled upon the walls. Greatly did such conduct scandalise Brother Fabri, a hater of self-advertisement, and, above all things, a gentleman. He tells how vanity led some noblemen to inscribe their names, with the tokens of their birth and rank, on the walls of the church, and even to paint their coats of arms and cut their initials with mallets and chisels on the pillars and marbles, thereby vexing and scandalising all men. He adds:—

"I have seen some vainglorious nobles, whose pride had brought them to such a pitch of folly, that when they went up into the Chapel of Mount Calvary and bowed themselves down upon the holy rock, wherein is the secret-hole of the Cross, they would pretend to be praying, and within the circle of their arms would secretly scratch with exceeding sharp tools their shields, with the marks — I cannot say of their noble birth, but rather of their silliness, for a perpetual memorial of their folly. But this they were forced to do secretly, for had the guardian of the holy rock, whose name is George, seen them doing so, he would have dragged them away by the hair of their head. The same madness moved some to inscribe their names, shields, and armorial bearings with sharp irons on the slab which covers the tomb on the most holy sepulchre of the Lord."

Felix goes on to describe in delightful language the feelings of the "devout and simple-minded pilgrim" like himself, when he came across the traces of all this industry. Apparently it induced him to curse and to swear, and to express angry hopes that the engraver would come to total grief, or, at least, lose his hand, and to petition the Almighty that He would be pleased

to see to the matter. One is glad to learn, though elsewhere I have read otherwise, that German nobles alone followed this evil fashion, which often caused poor Fabri, their fellow-countryman, to blush for them, "both among Christians and Pagans," for as the proverb which he cites says neatly enough, "the hands of fools befoul the sides of the house." One "fool" in particular almost drove him mad, for he was as fond of writing his name as that monarch of whom it is told that, armed with a piece of chalk, he might be met rushing breathless from room to room of his palace, while after him struggled attendants whose business it was, for a sufficient reason, diligently to apply the sponge and blot out the royal compositions. One is glad to learn that he, the pilgrim, not the king, came to a bad end, so that his kinsmen and friends "would have given much gold could they have wiped out his name from the earth which he had been at such pains to paint up everywhere."

I fear, however, that he has left many descendants, and it has been my lot to study their signs-manual and works of religion, prose, poetry and humour, not only at home, but in every distant land, and in every famous or sacred place which I have visited throughout the world. With Felix, I pray that writer's cramp of the most virulent nature may paralyse their scribbling fingers.

Besides those which I have enumerated, here are many other places to be seen; for instance, the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs, the Chapel of St. James, the Chapel of St. Thekla, the Chapel of the Archangel Michael, the Chapel of St. Mary of Egypt, and the Chapel of Mary Magdalene. In the church itself, too, are more sites, such as the spot where the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene, the Column of Scourging, the Foot-prints of Christ, the Prison of Christ, the Chapel of the Crowning with Thorns, the Chapel of the Raising

of the Cross, the Column of Derision, and the Chapel of St. Longinus.

Longinus by the way is fabled, by the monks of the sixth century and their successors, to be that Roman who pierced the side of the Saviour with his spear, and was recovered from the blindness of one eye by the blood which fell upon it. Afterwards he became a Christian and a saint. Near to his chapel is another of the Parting of the Raiment, and so forth.

I do not dwell in detail upon these various spots and their traditions because, to be plain, I have no faith in them. Even if it be admitted that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre does cover the place of the Crucifixion and its attendant events, which I believe to be most improbable, it is beyond credence that all these localities should be known with such exactitude. Moreover, many of them have been changed during the passage of the centuries. Their details, architectural and other, can be studied in any book of reference. As for the general effect produced upon a visitor by so much ornamentation, so many candles, and such a diversity of occurrences, miraculous and spiritual, said to be concentrated beneath these roofs, it is, I confess, bewildering. Days must be spent there before all the component parts become clear to the mind in their proper sequence, and those days many would prefer to devote to other objects, to them of greater interest.

What I was very glad to see, however, were the sword, spurs, and the cross worn by Godfrey de Bouillon, which are shown in the Latin Sacristy, especially the sword, a plain weapon of the ordinary Crusader form, wherewith he is said to have halved a giant Saracen as easily as a juggler severs a silk handkerchief. Godfrey, it will be remembered, was the hero of the first crusade, and after the capture of the city, was elected King of Jerusalem! This title he declined, saying that where the Saviour wore a crown of thorns he would have none of

gold, and in place of it took that of Baron of the Holy Sepulchre. He died, or was poisoned, in the year 1100, aged only thirty-eight, and in this church his grave is shown. It is something of a shock to read in Baedeker, hard to be convinced, that these relics, which look old and authentic enough, are "antiquities of doubtful genuineness." But what is there in this church that is not doubtful?

Not one of the least interesting sights of this ancient place, hallowed by so much suffering, so many traditions faithfully believed in for fifteen centuries, and the prayers of tens of thousands of good and earnest Christians, is, from some retired nook beneath the rotunda, to watch the behaviour of the various visitors. There is the superior person who knows all about it, and says so in a loud voice, waving his guide-books at sundry architectural details which he explains for the benefit of the unlearned, sometimes by a trifling confusion tacking the wrong description on to the object under view. Yonder stands the glib dragoman, rattling off his tale with the unconvincing facility of a parrot. Next come Russian pilgrims, pious happy folk who know no doubt, whose faith is built upon a rock. If you were to suggest to these that this was not the real spot of the Crucifixion and the rising of the Saviour, probably they would look upon you as an emissary of antichrist, or at the least, an infidel. With sighs and tears and beating of the breast such as those of the publican in the parable, they go by, genuflecting, kissing, prostrating themselves, while the learned person of whom they take no notice, points them out and discourses upon them as though they were wild animals.

Then appear another party—three ladies, two gentlemen, and a youth of about twelve, transatlantic in origin and beautifully dressed, all of them. Their hands in their pockets, they stroll down the church of the Crusaders chattering loudly—but every one chatters here, it is the pleasing habit of the place. What does surprise and make

the observer in his corner wonder if he sees aright is the fact that the two gentlemen of the party wear their hats, the head of the youth being adorned with a brilliant fez. The middle-aged inhabitant of these islands who, do what he will, cannot altogether keep himself up to date, rubs his eyes, remembering that ever so many years ago he was taught to take off his hat, even in a tramp's lodging-house, if Mr. and Mrs. Tramp were at home, and that the same rule might *à fortiori* be supposed to hold in what is, after all, the oldest, and by many, the most venerated fane dedicated to the Almighty in all Christendom. Even if these visitors to that place had no belief or reverence for its Master, it might still be supposed to hold.

Ultimately this particular party, still covered, advanced to the door of the Chapel of the Angels and the Holy Sepulchre. David, our dragoman, a man of mild and inoffensive manners, sprang from his seat, muttering something. It appears that as a native Christian of Jerusalem he has certain rights in the Holy Sepulchre.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Knock their hats off," he answered; and, pushing through the little crowd of Russians, David placed himself at the low door of the Chapel of the Angels, quite prepared for action.

Whether it was that the gentlemen saw something threatening in his eye, or, as was also suggested, that the entrance being so low it proved more convenient to pass it uncovered, I know not. At least, they removed their hats, so David was not obliged to resort to a violence which I am sure is foreign to his nature. Anyhow, his determination to use it if necessary, sent him up, under all the circumstances, at least fifty per cent. in my estimation.

The Holy Sepulchre, apparently, did not interest them much, and the pilgrims emerged almost as quickly as they went in, replacing their headgear as they came. Then a really good idea struck them. The ladies, one gentleman, and the hopeful in the fez, arranged themselves in

an artistic group over against the sacred building, with the wall of the dome for a background; while the other gentleman, with much preparation, unslung his kodak, focussed and photographed them. Oh! that Felix Fabri had been there to see, and could have bequeathed us his impressions of that inimitable scene. As for myself, feeling my temper getting the better of me, and not wishing to be involved in an unseemly dispute, I left the church.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES AND THE WAILING OF THE JEWS

We visited many other places in Jerusalem, but few of these impressed themselves much upon me, principally because I could not bring myself to believe that there was even a probability that they had to do with the events which are reported to have happened in them. Thus, there is a fine Armenian church, which as a church is worth looking at, where St. James is said to have been beheaded. He may have been, but I can discover no sufficient evidence of the fact. All that the Bible, a much-neglected book of reference, says about it is that when Herod the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the Church "he killed James the brother of John with the sword." Well, it may have happened here. In this church there are old porcelain picture-tiles, which are really very curious.

Then there is the house of Caiaphas, now an Armenian monastery, where we saw an altar, said to be made of the stone which closed the entrance to the sepulchre of Christ. This same stone is also to be seen in the Chapel of the Angels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a difficulty which Fabri gets over by stating that the faithful cut it into two. By the way, in his time, pilgrims stole fragments of that stone almost more greedily than anything else. A companion of Fabri's bribed one of the Armenian guardians with two ducats to break a piece from it, which the pair of them did by stealth in the darkness. This knight died at sea—surely the Armenian guardian should

also have died, but perhaps he did—and Felix, evidently much to his delight, inherited the fragment, which he took home with him to Ulm. In this monastery also we were shown a little cell where the Saviour is said to have been imprisoned before his trial, also the place where Peter denied his Master, and the tombs of many Armenian patriarchs. The last are undoubtedly genuine; for the other sites there seems to be no real authority, although, much as they are to-day, they were all of them shown to pilgrims in the time of Fabri. In a few brief lines Baedeker disposes of their claims.

Another noted building is the Coenaculum or the Chamber of the Last Supper, now a mosque, but evidently from the style of the architecture formerly used by Christians of the Crusader period, probably as a church. We know that every building in Jerusalem has been destroyed once, if not more often, since the time of our Lord, and this fact is fatal to any illusion connected with an upper chamber standing in the year 1900, and exhibiting even a stone upon which the Saviour is reported to have sat at the last Supper. The place, however, has many traditions. For instance, the Virgin is said to have died there: also it is the reputed scene of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. Lastly, in an adjoining room is a coffer covered with embroidered cloth, alleged to be a copy of the sarcophagus of David, who, as the Moslems declare, is buried in the vaults beneath. All authorities report that it is comparatively modern, nor was I sufficiently interested to attempt to see it, to do which its Moslem guardians must be rather heavily "insulted" by the travelling Christian.

All we know is that somewhere in the City of David, David was buried; somewhere stood that upper chamber where were uttered the immortal and immortalising words recorded by St. John; somewhere rose the palace of Caiaphas where Jesus Christ was mocked, scourged, and crowned with those thorns that symbolise the lot of all

humanity. Whether it was here or 100 yards or 500 yards distant, what does it matter? It matters nothing at all.

A more interesting expedition to my mind is to hire horses and ride to the Mount of Olives by way of the Valley of Hinnom. This is a desolate, waterless place, associated with many an ancient, evil memory, whereof it was prophesied "that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the Valley of the son of Hinnom, but the Valley of slaughter." Here is that Tophet "which is in the Valley of the children of Hinnom," which Josiah destroyed when "he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men . . . that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech."

From this valley Hinnom we get the name Gehenna, a synonym of hell, and near to it is the Aceldama, or House of the Field of Blood, where for generations pilgrims have been buried. Hence it is easy to see how, as Dr. Bliss informed me he had proved by his excavations, the ancient Jerusalem must have stretched much further in this direction than does the modern town. The natural lie of the land, and the defences provided by the position and fall of the valley, make it almost imperative that this area should have been included in the walls. Following round it we came to the Pool of Siloam, now an evil-smelling mud-hole, from which, holding a handkerchief to my face, I was glad to escape as fast as my horse could carry me.

After riding for some distance along the Valley of Jehoshaphat, we began the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and, following a steep and narrow path, came to the Russian church and hospice which stand upon the summit. Buildings belonging to the Russians are numerous in the Holy Land. When looking at them it has more than once occurred to me that in the case of new troubles in that region, their stout walls and towers would form very

serviceable coigns of vantage to a power which for religious, if for no other reasons, would not be averse to establishing itself on the coasts of Palestine. Indeed, although I have little to go on beyond the results of my own observation, I believe that the erection of so many hospices and kindred establishments has a steady political purpose quite distinct from any present pious and charitable use of these edifices. Those who live may see its development before they are older by twenty years.

Close to the church stands a belvidere tower, which must be quite a hundred and fifty feet high, and is built in six storeys. To its top where, if I remember right, bells are hung, those whose heads are strong enough may climb by a circular winding stair of iron, protected with a singularly low and inefficient handrail, over which it would be easy to pitch in a fit of vertigo. I contented myself with stopping at one of the lower platforms, whence the view was magnificent.

Below were stretched the valley of Jehoshaphat, Mount Moriah crowned with its mosques, and the Hill of Zion; every detail, indeed, of walled Jerusalem, with the rugged mountains and valleys that lie about her. Still more wonderful is the prospect to the east, for there, four thousand feet below gleam the misty waters of the Dead Sea, encircled with stony hills, and separated from Jerusalem by leagues of the most desolate country to be found in all the earth. There, too, a green streak, drawn as it were across a drab-coloured sheet of paper, runs the river Jordan, and beyond it rise dim mysterious mountains, where Moses once stood to gaze upon the Promised Land. Altogether the scene was worth the climb up that uncomfortable and insufficient stair. From the top, whence poor David returned exceeding dizzy, it must be even more impressive.

Leaving the Russian buildings we rode to the Chapel of the Ascension. Since the seventeenth century this has been in the possession of the Mahommedans, although

the various sects of Christians have prayer recesses within its walls, and on great occasions are permitted to hold services according to their respective rites. A Moslem custodian showed us the place, pointing out the footprint of Christ, said to have been impressed upon the rock as He rose heavenward, which, says Baedeker, "must have been frequently renewed." By the footprint is a small round hole, and as our guide seemed thoroughly conversant with all the circumstances surrounding the Ascension, I asked him what it was and how it came there. Not in the least abashed he replied that when the "Hadji" went up to heaven He had His walking-stick in His hand, with which He struck the rock as He sprang from it, leaving the mark we see to-day. I thanked him very much for this interesting information, and we parted with mutual regret.

In this connection the reader may remember that the site shown from the earliest days on the Mount of Olives does not tally with what we are told in Scripture. St. Luke says: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Now Bethany lies some way beyond the Mount of Olives, at a greater distance from Jerusalem, whither it is especially stated the disciples returned "with great joy."

From the Chapel of the Ascension we went to the Church of the Lord's Prayer, that it is said, the Saviour repeated to the Apostles on this spot. The buildings consist of a chapel and a quadrangle, enclosing an open space and surrounded by covered cloisters, on the walls of which are marble slabs with the Lord's Prayer engraved upon them in over thirty different languages. This graceful and original building was set here in 1868 at the expense of a certain Princess Latour d'Auvergne, who has now been some few years dead. Long before her day, however, indeed before that of Saewulf, who lived about

1100, a church stood here, which he describes by tradition as having been very beautiful, until it was entirely destroyed by the Pagans. In the centre of the south cloister is a life-sized marble of great artistic merit, representing the Princess herself as she imagined that she would be after death. Her body, however, does not lie beneath. Near by to this monument is an urn containing the heart of her father and a slab with a long passage concerning him, transcribed from some historian.

Leaving the cloisters, we were guided by the sister in charge, one of the little community of nuns who live here, to the chapel, which was built also by the Princess Latour. Observing wide and dangerous cracks in the walls, I asked why they were not mended, whereupon, almost with tears, the good sister told me a sad story. It seems that the Princess, who was a woman of large wealth, after she had built the church and court, contributed from year to year sufficient for their upkeep and for the necessities of the nuns. Further, she announced her intention of endowing the establishment. But death came upon her very suddenly, before she had time even to make a will, and those who inherited her possessions seem to have recognised no responsibilities in connection with what they may have considered a freak of the departed.

The result is that the few sisters who remain in the convent are quite penniless, and live on charity and what they can earn by the making of butter to sell in Jerusalem. So deep is their poverty, indeed, that they are truly grateful for any trifle which the pilgrim chooses to bestow upon them. Worse still, if anything can be worse, the Princess was cheated by her builders, and the walls of the church are cracking very badly, owing to the insufficiency of their foundations, so that unless funds are forthcoming to carry out extensive and necessary repairs, the whole place must ere long fall into ruins. If by chance these lines should come

under the eye of any co-religionist of those good sisters who has the wealth and the will to help them in a distress which is none of their own making, I can assure him or her that the work will be as good as it is needful.

This story is a poignant example of the common folly of procrastination where the welfare of others is at stake, or the wishes of a lifetime have to be formally assured. The poor Princess should have studied her Montaigne, and learned wisdom from him. "Whatsoever I have to doe before death, all leasure to end the same seemeth short unto me, yea, were it but of one hour. Somebody not long since, turning over my writing-table, found by chance a memorial of something I would have done after my death. I told him (as, indeed, was true) that, being but a mile from my house, and in perfect health and lustie, I had made haste to write it, because I could not assure myself I should ever come home in safety. . . . A man should ever, as much as in him lieth, be ready booted to take his journey, and, above all things, looke he hath then nothing to doe but with himselfe."

Truly words of sense, which all of us would do well to learn by heart.

Descending the Mount of Olives, we went for a ride round a great part of the walls of Jerusalem, so far as the Damascus gate and back again to the neighbourhood of that of Jaffa. Here we dismissed our horses, and, as it chanced to be Friday, walked through a new set of even filthier lanes than any with which I had made acquaintance, to the Place of Wailing of the Jews. It is a strait place in front of a fragment of the ancient wall, which measures between fifty and sixty feet in height. The lower courses of this wall are here built up of vast stones, laid (with what unheard-of labour no man will ever know), as I suppose, in the time of Solomon.

Facing the wall about a score of Jews, men and women

of all ages, were engaged in "wailing." The women really wept with intervals for repose, but the men, as strange a collection of human beings as ever I saw, did not give way to their feelings to that extent. They rubbed their faces against the huge blocks, which occasionally they kissed, or read from the Scriptures, or muttered prayers. One tall, pale man attracted my particular attention. He was clad in what looked like a dirty night-garment, surmounted by a very greasy fur cap. Thrusting his nose literally into a crack in the wall, he rocked his body backwards and forwards, pecking at the cavity like a nut-hatch at the bark of a tree, while he repeated prayers with the utmost fervour. When we arrived he was thus employed, nor had he ceased from his devotions as we departed. Nothing disturbed him. Even when a visitor walked up, held a camera to his head as though it were a pistol, touched the button and returned, remarking "Got him!" he showed neither surprise nor anger.

This scene is often described as touching. Personally I found it grotesque, even to sadness. In looking at these Jews, many of whom, I am told, live upon charity, there arose in my practical Western mind the words of the old saying: "God helps those who help themselves." If it pleases them to say their prayers in public, although, as I think, the practice must be comparatively recent, for I do not remember any allusion to it in the writings of the earlier pilgrims, by all means let them do so. But surely they might add to them other more practical attempts to recover the heritage of their race. For instance, they might persuade their wealthier brethren to buy out the Turk. There are a dozen gentlemen on the London Stock Exchange who could do this without much individual inconvenience. Why do not the Hebrew family put to this purpose a portion of the riches which certain of them possess in such abundance? Surely it is only a question of price, and in such a cause mere money should not count. Are they held back by indifference and apathy

—or, perchance, by the mysterious chain of some divine decree? Or they might drill, buy arms, and make an insurrection. I am informed, however, that they prefer to await the advent of their Messiah, a man of blood and power, a Jewish Napoleon, who when he appears will bring about the glory and temporal advancement of the race.

To return; if this ceremony of wailing is imperative, why is it not celebrated at night? It is inconceivable to me that people so earnest as these poor Jews doubtless are can carry on their devotions with a mind undisturbed by such surroundings as I saw. All about the principal actors, and mixed up with them, was a motley crowd—beggars, halt, maimed, and disease-stricken; boys, who drew down their eyelids within six inches of your face to reveal the shrivelled balls beneath; men with tins the size of a half-gallon pot, which they shook before you, howling and vociferating for *baksheesh*, and *hoc genus omne*. Then, to complete the picture, in the background a small crowd of European and American sightseers, with their dragomen, some seated on boxes or rough benches, others standing in groups, laughing, smoking, and photographing the more noteworthy characters. Imagine men who will submit to it all! Imagine, also, what those fierce old heroes who held that wall for so long against the might of Rome would think and say of these descendants if they could see them thus mocked and humiliated at its foot! To one who, like the writer, in many ways admires and respects the Jew, who, moreover, has the deepest sympathy with him in the cruel sufferings and obloquy which for ages have been and are still heaped upon his ancient, chosen race, such a sight is nothing short of painful. For my part, were I born to this heritage I had rather make my petition in some rat-haunted cellar such as must be open even to the poorest.

Yet their final chants, which I did not wait to hear, for the sights, sounds, and smells of the place were too

much for me, must be rather fine. Here is the translation of one of them according to Baedeker:—

Leader. For the palace that lies desolate,
Response. We sit in solitude and mourn.
L. For the palace that is destroyed,
R. We sit in solitude, &c.
L. For the walls that are overthrown,
R. We sit, &c.
L. For our Majesty that is departed,
R. We sit, &c.
L. For our great men who lie dead,
R. We sit, &c.
L. For the precious stones that are burned,
R. We sit, &c.
L. For the priests who have stumbled,
R. We sit, &c.
L. For our kings who have despised Him,
R. We sit in solitude and mourn.

This wailing of the Jews is the last sight that I saw at Jerusalem, since at a desperately early hour on the following morning we bid farewell to the City of David, also very regretfully to David the dragoman, with whom we had a tender parting at the station. I can recommend him most confidently to any traveller in the Holy Land, who, I am sure, would find in him an intelligent and, what is more, a strictly honest guide.

It is not probable that I shall look upon Jerusalem again, but I am glad exceedingly to have visited this ancient and most sacred town. "Were you not disappointed with the Holy Land?" is a question which the returning traveller is often called upon to answer. For my part I was not in the least disappointed; indeed its living and perpetual interest came home to me more closely than I had dared to hope.

I know that many travellers are wont to give a different answer, but I submit respectfully that this is because they do not dig deep enough with the trowel of the imagina-

tion. They suffer their minds, also, to be disturbed by the crop of petty annoyances and disillusionments which dog the feet of the pilgrim. The beggars, the extortions, the playful ways of the Turkish authorities, the difficulties of Eastern travel, all these distract and worry them, till at last they begin to lose grip of the root of the matter, which sends its fibres through every verse of the Old and New Testaments and bears fruit in the scheme of our Christian faith. Also in many instances the country and its associations depress them. A daily consideration of sites and scenes connected with the mighty career of Jesus Christ, and with His divine and fathomless sorrows upon earth, in itself tends to overwhelm the spirit, if the spirit is of that order which strives to understand, to appreciate, or to reconstruct. Many abandon the task, others have not the qualities necessary to its attempt. Still for those who can overcome these obstacles, who, above all, can sweep away doubt's strangling web; who can lift the curtain of the generations and see afar the lamp of eternal truth burning, however dimly, a sojourn in the Holy Land is one of the highest and most excellent of educations.

I repeat, therefore, I am thankful that it should have fallen within the strangely varied experiences of my life. No man, as I suppose, can say that he understands the whole mystery of our religion. The veiled face of Truth, the secret meaning of things spiritual, are hidden from his purblind eyes. Stare and study how he will, at the best still he sees as in a glass darkly. Yet such study, if entered upon with a reverent and searching heart, does serve to kindle there an inner light and thus to illumine this glass, so that for him the shadows which move across it thenceforth acquire a somewhat sharper outline. At times even he becomes able, or thinks that he is able, to interpret more clearly the meaning of those fateful messages that are written there which in the future, as in the past, must constitute one of the most earnest and im-

portant studies of mankind. The land we leave behind us, but, if we have travelled it aright, its immortal lessons will endure.

When, after six hours' crawl through stormy weather, the traveller from Jerusalem finally arrives at the Jaffa terminus, his first eager question is, "What of the sea, O Cook; what of the sea?" Months before I had put the same question to the station-master at Charing Cross, and here in this far place the answer was much the same. "Moderate" was the dispiriting reply, and now, as then, I knew that trouble was ahead of us.

Nor was I mistaken. There, a mile or more from land, rolled the Russian steamer that was to convey us to Port Said; and there, too, lay none other than the familiar *Flora* which bore us from Egypt to the shores of Cyprus. Thinking to earn a little extra profit, the agents of the Austrian Lloyd had collected a party of Cyprian pilgrims, purposing to dump them ashore at Jaffa, and proceed to Alexandria in time to ship the outward mails. But Jaffa is not a port to be treated in so cavalier a fashion, and thus it happened, as it has happened ten thousand times before, that the sea got up, and the pilgrims could not get off.

The *Flora*, anxious to proceed upon her voyage, and always conscious of awaiting mails, kept up an incessant bellow with her siren. But no one took the slightest notice of these passionate appeals; not a boat dared to attempt the eye of stormy water which foamed through the iron reef. Either the *Flora* must wait till the sea fell, or take her pilgrims on a gratis trip to Port Said, whence they would claim to be returned at the Company's expense. In the end, after steaming about disconsolately till nightfall, putting to sea and returning again just to fill in the time, she chose the latter alternative and departed with a swan's song of farewell hoots, that probably echoed with some accuracy the state of the temper

of all on board. One consolation we had, however; our ship could not depart, since she carried five hundred Russian pilgrims whom she was bound to land, even if she rolled her topmasts out off Jaffa for a week on end.

The few sights that I have described in a previous chapter once seen, Jaffa, from a traveller's point of view, becomes a hopeless place. Recognising this, we proceeded to spend the day in doing nothing as comfortably as possible by walking out of the din and smells of the town to the lonely beach above. Here we sat down upon a bed of lovely cockle-shells tinted to every possible shade of pink and brown, and contemplated the roaring sea. In front of us, jutting through the foam and vanishing from time to time beneath the rushing combers, lay the massive boilers and other works torn from the hold of some wrecked steamer. The sight was suggestive enough, but perhaps there is no shore in the world where the sea has taken a greater toll of lives. What scenes of terror has this beach witnessed! Here is one of them. Josephus, who says of the harbour "that a more dangerous situation to shipping cannot be imagined," relates it of the drowning of certain Jews not long before the fall of Jerusalem.

"At break of day the wind called by the people of the country the black north wind arose, and caused the most terrible tempest that had been known. The vessels of those who had escaped from Joppa, by being thrown against the rocks or dashed against each other, were broken to pieces. Some, who by dint of rowing endeavoured to escape being foundered by keeping the open sea, were tossed upon the mountainous billows, and then precipitated into the profound abyss of waters, and a great number of the vessels sunk. During this violent contention of the elements, the noise occasioned by the dashing of the vessels, and the lamentations and outcries of the miserable sufferers, were terrifying beyond description. Many of the people were washed overboard by the waves, and either drowned or dashed to pieces against the rocks; others fell upon their swords; and numbers

otherwise perished on board the wrecks. The water was coloured with the blood of the deceased whose carcases were dispersed upon the coast. During this shocking scene the Roman soldiers waited to destroy those who should be driven on shore alive. It is computed that the number of bodies driven on shore was 4200."

Truly the mercies of ancient war were tender.

The Anglo-Saxon merchant Saewulf in the year 1102 here witnessed another disaster almost as awful. When they were eight days out from Cyprus—now it is a night's run—his vessel made Joppa, whereat he was filled "with an unexpected and extraordinary joy." On arrival at the port some one said to him, as he believed by "divine inspiration," what some one commonly says to the traveller who would disembark at Jaffa, "Sir, go on shore to-day lest a storm come on in the night, which will render it impossible to land to-morrow."

Thereupon Saewulf, sensible man, was suddenly seized with a great desire of landing, and, in fact, did land without difficulty, and went to bed. Next morning on coming out of church he found great confusion raging in the place, and was carried along with the crowd to the shore—

"When we saw the waves swelling higher than mountains, and innumerable bodies of drowned persons of both sexes scattered over the beach, while the fragments of ships were floating on every side. Nothing was to be heard but the roaring of the sea and the dashing together of the ships, which drowned entirely the shouts and the clamour of the people. Our own ship, which was a very large and strong one, and many others laden with corn and merchandise, as well as with pilgrims coming and returning, still held by their anchors, but how they were tossed by the waves! how their crews were filled with terror! how they cast overboard their merchandise! what eye of those who were looking on could be so hard and stony as to refrain from tears? We had not looked at them long before the ships were driven from their anchors by the violence of the waves, which threw them now

up aloft, and now down, until they were run aground or upon the rocks, and there they were beaten backwards and forwards until they were crushed to pieces. For the violence of the wind would not allow them to put out to sea, and the character of the coast would not allow them to put in to shore with safety. Of the sailors and pilgrims who had lost all hope of escape, some remained on the ships, others laid hold of the masts or beams of wood; many remained in a state of stupor, and were drowned in that condition, without any attempts to save themselves; some (although it may appear incredible) had in my sight their heads knocked off by the very timbers of the ships to which they had attached themselves for safety; others were carried out to sea on the beams, instead of being brought to land; even those who knew how to swim had not strength to struggle with the waves, and very few thus trusting to their own strength reached the shore alive. Thus, out of thirty very large ships, of which some were what are commonly called dromunds, some gulafres, and others cats, all laden with palmers and merchandise, scarcely seven remained safe when we left the shore. Of persons of both sexes there perished more than a thousand that day. Indeed, no eye ever beheld a greater misfortune in the space of a single day, from all of which God snatched us by His grace, to Whom be honour and glory for ever. Amen."

Such are two of the sea tragedies recorded of that cruel reef of rocks and the shell-strewn shore on which we sat. Doubtless it has seen others almost as bad; indeed I have, I think, read of some in various writings, and many must have met with no historian. But although the words of Josephus, that a "more dangerous situation to shipping cannot be imagined," are nearly as true to-day as they were when he wrote them, the Turk does nothing to improve the port. It has struck me that he may have a reason for this beyond those which are customary throughout the Ottoman dominions. He may not wish that it should be made too convenient for the landing either of tourists—or of troops.

Next morning, to my intense relief, broke calm and

fine, with a rapidly falling sea. Had it been otherwise we must have abandoned all hope of catching the P. and O. steamer *Caledonian*, by which our passages were booked at Port Said. Now this risk seemed done with. As we were not to go aboard till the afternoon I attended the Sunday morning service, which in Jaffa is held in the room of the Mission to Jews. The congregation was not large, still two or three were gathered together. Afterwards came the last, and not the best, of our many meals in the hostelries of Palestine, washed down with a stirrup cup of the sweet wine of the country, whereof by now I was heartily tired. Then, having carefully collected the tortoise Capernaum from the garden where he strayed and restored him to his basket, we marched off, and, reaching the landing-stage, were, without mishap, taken aboard the Russian ship by Cook's boatmen. These are as fine a set of black-skinned sailormen as ever I had to do with in any clime. Doubtless at this dangerous port they are picked with especial care. At any rate their stalwart appearance, skill at the oars and tiller, and the wild, inspiring song with which they drive the large boat through the gap in the reef and over the wide-arched billows, suggested confidence even to the fearful, and, for once, made parting with *baksheesh* a pleasure.

About two o'clock we got aboard the clean-looking vessel, which was engined by an English firm, and did not smell half so badly of pilgrims as I was warned that she would. As she was not to sail till five, however, I amused myself by sitting on the poop and watching the humours of the deck. They were various. First of all, a bag of beans, which was being shipped, burst, and on those Russian sailors was imposed the Psyche-like task of collecting each wandering seed. Then I became aware of a great commotion near the funnel, and was informed by my stalwart friend, the captain of Cook's boatmen, who still lingered on board, that it was caused by Jews wailing, a public ceremony, I had imagined, which they

reserved for the wall of Jerusalem. I went to inspect, and found a family of Persian Hebrews in a very parlous state.

They were all squatted on the deck, the woman alternately weeping loudly and blowing her nose with her fingers, the husband sitting by wrapped in depression, a son of about ten now uttering loud and sympathetic yells and now playing with little bits of wood at some game upon the deck, and other offspring, all more or less excited and vociferous. This was their hard case. Actuated by religious impulse they had travelled from Persia, or elsewhere, with a view of being, in due course, buried at Jerusalem—and now the port officials declined to allow them even to disembark. There is a Turkish law that no Jew may set foot in the Holy Land, although, in fact, Jews there are as plentiful as blackberries upon an autumn hedge. The explanation of this discrepancy between rule and fact is, of course, *baksheesh*. For about five pounds a head, judiciously distributed, any number of Jews may proceed unmolested to Jerusalem and spend the rest of their days there. These particular unfortunates, however, had neglected to provide themselves with the necessary cash, and as the case was beyond the reach of promiscuous and private charity, nothing remained for them except to return to Persia, or some other distant place of origin. And return they did, at any rate to Port Said, where, on the following morning, I saw them being bundled off the ship with little ceremony.

Another more amusing sight, for the Jew comedy had its tragic side, was afforded by a Mussulman who, at a certain hour, was moved to make his devotions. Accordingly, having selected a nice clean spot upon the deck, and made sure that it faced towards Mecca, he went off and fetched his prayer carpet. Meanwhile, gradually the ship swung round with the tide or current. Back came the Faithful, spread his carpet and began the accustomed prayers and prostrations. In the midst

of one of the latter his eye caught the ball of the westering sun. I do not know what happens to the Moslem who prays with his face in the wrong direction, some such results, perhaps, as in the Middle Ages were fabled to follow the repetition of the Lord's Prayer backwards by witches and warlocks. At any rate I cannot often remember seeing a follower of the prophet so visibly upset. With a bound he snatched up his carpet and, rushing to the other side of the ship, spread it and began again in the greatest of hurries.

Now a furious quarrel which had sprung up between the boatmen who lie about the steamer's sides forces our attention. Two of them rave at each other; they gesticulate, they lift oars and boathooks, and threaten sudden death. Anticipating murder, I inquire the reason of the feud, and am informed that it is about three halfpence. When I look again—lo, these maddened ruffians, seated comfortably cheek by jowl in the same boat and full of mutual good feeling, are engaged in helping another craft to reach the companion.

This boat is laden with a fat and frightened-looking Turk, accompanied by his harem, their progeny, a huge basket of oranges, a wardrobe done up in sacks and blue handkerchiefs, several feather-beds—one for each lady, I suppose—and a fine selection of jars and other pottery. The children, who are dumb with terror, having probably never seen the sea before, are passed up the ship's side by the leg or arm as may happen, exactly as though they were so many porkers. Then come the fat wives. Many are the false attempts which they make, always at the wrong time, to reach the grating from the tossing boat. At length the exasperated sailors, clutching them with unhallowed hands, drag them thither by main force, and with a rush and a gasp they waddle to the deck and sink down, mere dishevelled heaps of palpitating flesh. Next comes their lord, somehow, his turban all awry, a very different person, doubtless, to the stately-looking Moslem

we may have met walking the streets of Jerusalem and glancing round him with the eye of a master. After the man the feather-beds and the oranges, which get spilt; then a shrill whistle, a hoot from the siren, and the engine begins to bite at the clanking anchor-chain.

The screw turns, the vessel swings round to forge ahead; the great blue jelly-fish, fringed about with a purple more glorious than that of Tyre, begin to float past hurriedly and be crumpled up in the churning waters; the farewell shouts of the boatmen die away, and presently we are in the silence of the sea running towards the falling night. Thirty minutes more and the sandy coast of Palestine, with its long background of grey and desolate hills, fades slowly to a line behind us, that grows ever thinner and fainter till at length it seems to sink into the deep and vanishes.

Here this humble record of a journey, which to him who sets it down at any rate was of interest, ought by rights to end. Yet as it is but human to smile at the misfortunes of our fellows, the reader may wish to learn what befell us at Port Said.

The caviar on board the Russian boat was excellent, though as there was something of a sea, I alone could eat it, but it is impossible to say as much of the sleeping accommodation. At the first streak of dawn I rose and went on deck, for we were near Port Said. Presently out of the grey mists of the morning I saw a majestic steamer appear upon our bow, running westward at about fifteen knots. Evidently she had cleared from Port Said so soon as daylight made it safe for her to round the breakwater.

"That's the *Caledonian*," said a voice at my side.

"What?" I gasped, "the *Caledonian*? Why, I have booked passages in her, and she doesn't sail till noon to-day."

"It's her all the same. I have shipped in her too

often to be mistaken," answered the voice with calm conviction.

The *Caledonian* it was sure enough, who with a lack of principle unworthy of so fine a ship, had calmly departed from Port Said six hours before her time, leaving her wretched passengers from the Holy Land to find their way home as best they might. As the Jaffa boat was one day late she might be two days late; nobody ever dreams of waiting for a boat that has to do business with Jaffa.

Very, very sadly did I return to that crowded cabin to impart the news to my still slumbering companion. At this time of the year all the liners from the far East pass the Canal full to the last berth. Moreover, to a man in a hurry to get home, the prospect of a long sojourn at a Port Said hotel, while waiting for a ship, is not pleasant. I knew it, for, as I have said, once in past years that experience had been mine. No wonder, then, that we were depressed. As we dropped past the breakwater, however, we perceived that the Orient liner *Oroya* was finishing taking in her coal, and hope rose in our breasts. Perhaps on her we could find a berth, though, evidently, there was no time to lose, for these mail steamers do not wait. As the last basket of coal comes on board, before it comes indeed, up goes the anchor and they forge ahead to sea.

We anchored, and then followed about as tumultuous a two hours as I have ever spent. With my eye on the rapidly emptying coal barges of the *Oroya*, I was anxious to disembark, but this was just what I found it impossible to do. No local Cook appeared, for it was still early, but his dragoman, a cross-eyed son of Ham, of whom I have no pleasing recollection, put me off with soft words as to getting ashore. At length we managed it, without his assistance, and then came troubles innumerable. The luggage was carted off to the custom-house, I know not why, and leaving it there my nephew and I cantered—on our own legs—to and fro along the hot and sandy streets of Port Said. There was a British

India steamer in, and under the guidance of a black youth whom we had picked up, as it was nearest, I visited the office of this line, only to find that she was a cargo boat, though willing by special arrangement to take passengers with time upon their hands. Then we started off for the Orient Office more than a mile away, and there, by the courtesy and kindness of the agent, Mr. Stapledon, succeeded in securing an empty second-class cabin, for the ship which came from Australia was crowded.

The rest is too mixed and in a sense too trivial to describe, but the end of it was that perspiring and utterly worn-out we did get aboard the *Oroya* just before she sailed. So we departed from Port Said, leaving behind us an unrecoverable portmanteau, various other packages, and last, but not least, the unhappy Capernaum, who in the mad scurry had been abandoned in his yellow basket in a secluded corner of the Russian steamer.

As the great liner got under weigh, above the clanking of cables, the roaring of steam, and the shouting of the coalboys pushing off their empty floats, I screamed the details of my loss to the kindly Mr. Stapledon in the boat beneath, imploring him to rescue poor Capernaum, who I feared would starve to death, and to forward him by the first opportunity. A month or so later I attended at Ditchingham station, and there in the same yellow basket, carefully covered with canvas, was Capernaum, depressed by his long, cramped wanderings, but still hearty. Now, as I have said, he inhabits the garden, but disliking our climate, which forces him to spend so much of his time underground, continually attempts to return to the Sea of Galilee via the stableyard and the orchard.

So after days of swift steaming through quiet seas we came to Marseilles. Thence I travelled by train to Paris, where the bookstalls were laded with caricatures of her Majesty of a nature offensive to her subjects,[1] and

[1] Alas! that I must now write—of her late Majesty.

the railway officials had employed their leisure by inscribing on the iron girders legends in honour of our enemies, such as "*A bas les Anglais!*" and "*Gloire au Général Cronjé!*"

Thus ended this Winter Pilgrimage in the year of our Lord 1900. Now when it is over—one more of life's turned leaves—I am very glad that it was undertaken and accomplished.

THE END

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